

ANIMALS & MEN



THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



The hunt for the Ivory-Billed
Woodpecker; Illegal Lynx reintroduction
in Scotland; *That Morgawr* video;
Encounter with a Pooka?

Animals & Men #27

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Cover Picture: An ivorybill leaves a nest in the Singer Tract in Southern Louisiana in 1947.
Photo by James. T. Tanner

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C.F.Z

EDITORIAL



THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE

Dear Friends,

I am only too aware that over the last few issues there has been more than its fair share of doom and gloom in these pages. However, this is one of the most exciting editorials that I have sat down to write over the last eight years. In all the time that I have been director of the Centre for Fortean Zoology, things have never gone so well.

As of the end of May we have been registered as a non-profit making organisation with HM Stamp Office, and we are in the process of applying for Charitable Status. The clauses of the *CFZ Trust for Conservation and Animal Welfare* – the umbrella organisation which now administers the Centre for Fortean Zoology, can be read on our website. However, if you do not have internet access, then just send us a SAE and we will gladly send you a copy for your information.

We spent the end of May and beginning of June in the north east of England where we conducted the first part of a thorough investigation into the “*Monster of the Mere*” (as the local papers have dubbed the creature that is attacking wildfowl on the WWT Nature reserve at Martin Mere). It is almost certainly a giant wels catfish and we shall be returning to Lancashire at the end of July to conclude our investigations. There will be more details and pictures in the next issue. Without spoiling anything I can tell you that we have unearthed so much information, that a full length book is in the pipeline and will hopefully be on sale in time for Christmas.

I am also going to use this opportunity to welcome aboard our newest addition to the team. John Fuller joined as an administrative assistant in May, and is now so much a part of the family that we don't know what we would have done without him. He has managed to make order out of the chaos of our back issues and book orders and for the first time ever, the CFZ is as efficient as we should have been all along.

We are also planning to purchase an area of Devon woodland to run as a nature reserve. When we have done so we shall be working alongside various community groups in the area to run several conservation programmes there, including the reintroduction of species of butterfly and moth which have become extinct in Devon over the last century.

We are spending money hand over fist at the moment on our various projects, and we are desperately in need of more funding than we can raise purely from the sale of books and magazines, and from what we raise at the annual *Wyrd Weekend*. Any fundraising ideas would be gratefully appreciated, as would donations of cash, books and equipment. As we enter our second decade, we have gone from being a motley band of back-room hobbyists to being the only full time fortan zoological research organisation in the world. I am proud of what we have achieved so far, and even prouder of what we are going to achieve – with your help – in the future.

Slainte Mhor

Jon Downes (Director, CFZ)



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Compiled this issue by Jon and Richard while Rebecca looks on via MSN and Lisa successfully catches our monitor lizard that has been roaming round my bedroom for the last week



JUST A FLUKE?

Scientists have discovered a new species of whale after examining the DNA of some of the marine mammals washed ashore in California. Genetic analysis of the five known whale specimens indicates they represent a species distinct from their southern Pacific cousins, despite their similar appearance. The new whale becomes the 21st species of beaked whale to be described scientifically. A report detailing the discovery will be published in July in the journal *Marine Mammal Science*.

The elusive beaked whales are among the least-studied of all mammals. They live in deep water, diving to great depths in pursuit of squid and other prey. The whales are marked by their near-total lack of teeth. In

some species, only adult males have teeth, and then just two, which they use as tusks to spar.

Often the only whales available for study are those that are stranded, wash ashore dead or are captured commercially. Scientists based the last identification of a new species of beaked whale, in 1991, in part on specimens found for sale in a fish market in Peru.

SOURCE: *Ananova* 10th April 2002

NOT SUCH A G'DAY

ABC News in Australia announced in early April that a jellyfish responsible for the death of an American tourist in northern Australia is a new species. 44-year-old Robert King died in Townsville Hospital after being stung while swimming off Port Douglas last month. It's the second stinger related death in Queensland this year.

Researcher Dr Jamie Seymour says tests have confirmed the latest fatality is the result of a new species. *"The types of stinging cells you get are pretty much unique to an individual jellyfish species. The problem we've got from this gentleman who got stung at opal reef was that we got some skin scrapings we got some stinging cells and they're stinging cells that I've never ever seen before. Given that i've got a pretty good handle on what box jellyfish were out there and we haven't seen those particular stinging cells before leads me to believe that what stung this gentleman was something we haven't seen before."*

No, we said BLACK scuttle fly

Scientists have discovered a previously unknown insect species living deep in the shingle on the Sussex coast. The *Megaselia yatesi* has been named after Dr Barry Yates, who found it by setting a specially made trap at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve. Though unremarkable to look at, the small black scuttle fly is unique. It lives up to a metre deep in shingle where it feeds and breeds in between the stones. The strange environment protects it from predators and seasonal changes in temperature, said Dr Yates, 45, East Sussex County Council's reserve manager. He said: *"We have got lots of very rare creepy-crawlies for some peculiar reason. It's the climate and soil that make the area special."* SOURCE: *This is Brighton and Hove* 14.4.02

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OTTER THAN JULY

before either."

The *Singapore Strait Times* announced proudly on 04 Apr 2002 that "Smooth Otters" (we assume they mean the Asian short clawed otter), have re-established themselves as a breeding species in Singapore after a break of forty years or so. The fish in a pond at the Sungei Buloh Nature Park were jumping up and down, thrashing about in the water. Geologist Nick Baker, a park volunteer, wondered why.

Then, he saw it - a little brown body with small beady eyes in the murky waters. Mr Baker, 44, said: *'My pulse rate increased as the otter swam towards me. I tried to hide. Then, right before my very eyes, two adult otters ventured out onto the mudflats, followed closely by two of their excited offspring.'*

A pair wandered into the park more than three years ago and, after a period of time, two cubs were spied swimming around the swamps and playing on the mud banks.

PRETTY IN PINK

One of the weirdest reptile stories of the year, and furthermore one which may refer to a species hitherto unknown to science, was reported by the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation* on Fri, 14th June 2002.

Queensland holiday-makers Ed and Jo West have seen and photographed a pink goanna on the banks of the Roper River in southern Arnhem Land. The couple have taken their find to the Parks and Wildlife Commission in Katherine.

Mr West says he has never seen anything like it. *"We've lived at different places throughout Australia and we've got to know our natural wildlife fairly well and it's the first time that I've ever seen a goanna of that colour,"* he said.

The couple took the photos to Rory Chapple, who agrees it was a pink goanna, its hue probably due to a very rare form of albinism. *"It's nothing like I've ever seen before,"* Mr Chapple said. *"It's got pink in it and it's actually most of the whole body has got pink right through it. 'The people I talked to in Darwin who are involved in this field haven't seen this sort of thing*

LAST TRAIN TO CLARKESVILLE

Scientists working in Brazil's central Amazon have discovered two new monkey species the size of small cats, Conservation International announced. Full scientific descriptions of the monkeys, *Callicebus bernardi* and *Callicebus stephennashi*, were published in a special supplement to the peer-review journal *Neotropical Primates*.

"This once again demonstrates how little we know about biodiversity, these are the 37th and 38th new primate species described since 1990," said Conservation International's President Russell Mittermeier, who is also a co-author of the scientific descriptions.

The monkeys were discovered by Marc Van Roosmalen, a Dutch scientist working at Brazil's National Institute for Amazon Research in Manaus, 1,800 miles (2,900 kilometres) northwest of Rio de Janeiro. Van Roosmalen discovered the bernardi monkey - whom he named after the Netherlands' Prince Bernhard - between the east bank of Madeira river and the lower reaches of the Aripuana river. He found it by accident when he was traveling in the region searching for another new species, the dwarf marmoset.

The bernardi monkey is remarkable for its dark orange sideburns, chest and inner sides of its limbs. It has a reddish-brown back, and a white-tipped black tail. The bernardi's head and body measure about 37.5 centimeters (15 inches), with the tail adding another 55 centimeters (22 inches). An average individual weighs about 950 grams (33.25 ounces).

Van Roosmalen found the second monkey last year while conducting a scientific survey near the Purus river. The stephennashi is a silver monkey with a black forehead and red sideburns and chest and inner sides of its limbs.

Its head and body measures about 27.5 centimeters (11 inches), with the tail adding some 42 centimeters (17 inches). An average individual weighs 690 grams (24.15 ounces). SOURCES: June 23, 2002 *The Star*, Malaysia, *Daily Telegraph*, June 24th, Chris Moiser pers. comm.

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THYLACINE Ø THE TIMES

Then latest episode in the saga of the search for a surviving thylacine took place in June when a man from north-west Tasmania said that a thylacine had stared at him before following two wombats it was hunting on a track near Circular Head. The man (who has not been named) who said he saw the tiger is reluctant to go public because of the stigma associated with sightings. James Malley, a renowned 'Tassie Tiger' hunter of Black River near Smithton, said the man phoned him soon after the incident on Tuesday. *"It was definitely a tiger. I get news of sightings like this extremely regularly and it all fits,"* said Mr Malley, who immediately went to the area of the reported sighting.

"That's not the only one I have heard of in that area.

Over the last two years I have probably had five [reports] and all fit with a seasonal pattern."

The man who reported the sighting said he had stopped his four-wheel-drive to engage its hubs and had turned the engine off. *"The wombats went past him for about 15 metres, flat out into the bush,"* said Mr Malley, *"Then in front of him, the tiger was no further than five metres away. He was dumbfounded. The tiger stopped. He saw it for more than 10 seconds and it just stopped and stared at him. He then got in his four-wheel-drive, knew it was no good chasing it through the bush, and came straight in and called me."*

Mr Malley said he had been unable to find thylacine footprints in the area. SOURCE: *The Hobart Mercury* 21 June 2002

ORIENTAL OPHIDIAN OCCURENCE

Regular readers will know of Jon's interest in the cryptofauna and, indeed the zoology in general, of Hong Kong. Yet another new snake species has been discovered, in an area, usually considered to be extremely well known and explored. The importance of Hong Kong as a living laboratory is outlined in an article on the CFZ website, and this new discovery merely underlines the points we have made there.

Four specimens of *Trimeresurus mucrosquamatus*, a type of pit viper commonly known as the branding iron head viper, have been found in the New Territories. It is a close relative of one of Hong Kong's eight other indigenous poisonous snakes, the bright green bamboo pit viper. However, it is known to be more aggressive, will strike readily if disturbed and has a reach of up to one metre. The discovery has baffled experts, who do not understand how it came to be overlooked.

Snake expert Dave Willot, who found all four specimens, does not believe the snakes are escaped pets or were brought from the mainland for illicit restaurants. Mr Willot, a consultant herpetologist, said he discovered the first snake dead at the roadside in 1999, followed by two last year and a in the spring of 2002. month. All were within 50 metres of each other close to Kei Ling Ha Lo Wai near Sai Kung.

"It's very strange that a population of these snakes could have gone undiscovered. Hong Kong has been studied quite well, but I don't think there is any other explanation," he said. SOURCE: *South China Morning Post* 28/04/2002

GLADIATOR ii

In the last issue of *Animals & Men*, we commented on the discovery of a whole new order of insects, which have been dubbed 'gladiators'. The first species was discovered in Namibia, and then specimens of a closely related animal were found as fossils. Now, a second species has been discovered in Vietnam. SOURCE: *The Namibian* Apr 19, 2002 (The Namibian/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX)

THEY SHOULD HAVE CALLED IT REDFERN'S PARROT

The Guardian, on Monday May 20, 2002, announced the discovery of a new species of parrot. To the astonishment of ornithologists it is bald. The discovery of the Bald parrot, or *Pagagio careco*, as it is known, since its home is in the Portuguese speaking Mato Grosso region of Brazil, has sent a flurry of excitement around the bird world. So far only one has been seen, but it has been photographed for a Brazilian bird magazine, and filmed by the local television network. It is so distinctive

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because of the lack of feathers on its head that experts have no doubt it is a previously unknown parrot. In the same way that a vulture which ate carrion had developed baldness to keep its head from getting too messy. The hunt is now on for more members of the same species.

PSYCHEDELIC SHACK

An uncredited internet report in May told how a rare Amazonian bird which was thought to be extinct after not being spotted for 45 years has been rediscovered by scientists. The golden-crowned manakin was found in the heart of the rainforest, in the Para region of Brazil, by a team surveying a road which is set to be paved over.

But conservationists fear the bird's survival could be threatened by the continued destruction of the forest for timber extraction, creation of pasture and road building. The small green and yellow bird was first discovered by scientist and South American bird life expert Helmut Sick in 1957, when only five specimens were found, and officially recognised as a species in 1959. Other attempts to find the manakin since then have been launched but have proved unsuccessful.

Scientist Fabio Olmos, a member of the BirdLife International team who rediscovered the species, said: "We were thrilled to find the lost manakin in an area that has been affected by logging and colonisation projects initiated by the Brazilian government.

"But large areas of the Amazonian rainforest need to be properly protected to ensure the future of this and other species of threatened birds."



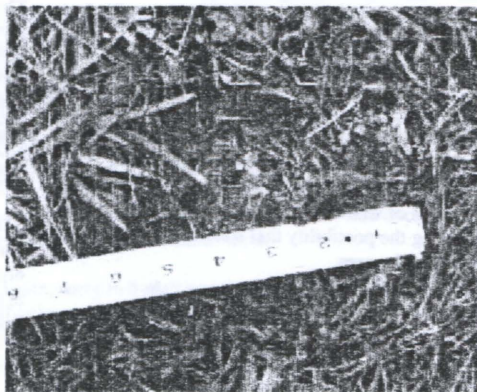
INDIANA WANTS ME

Indiana Fish and Wildlife Division officials and an Indiana University anthropologist aren't ruling out the possibility that the creature folks have spotted along Chapel Hill Road in remote, rugged Polk Township could be some sort of ape. The most recent sighting

occurred at 3:30 p.m. one afternoon in late January 2002 at the house of Rick Deckard and his sister, Sue Taylor, on Chapel Hill Road west of the entrance to the Hardin Ridge Recreation Area, south of Lake Monroe in Hoosier National Forest.

Two friends, Dale Moore and Penny Howell, had just driven up when they spotted the animal about 200 feet away at the back of the cleared property. They described it as standing in a sort of crouch on its rear legs, long front legs hanging down in front of it. They said it was covered in very long, nearly black hair, and guessed its height at around 5 feet and its weight at 200 pounds or more. They said when the creature saw them, it turned and moved away, down the slope into the woods. Howell said she saw a patch of white fur atop its head and down its neck.

It left tracks in the damp clay — tracks still visible two days later.



The tracks were about 4-5 inches, with four toe impressions and a heel mark. As it was four-toed rather than five-toed, they ruled out a bear. The prints were similar to cougar tracks, but for one feature. Many of the toeprints were tipped by deep punctures in the clay, apparently from long claws. In one print, three claws had cut deep incisions 1.5 inches long. Local biologist Jim Mitchell said late that cougars don't leave claw marks when they walk.

While boots wouldn't dent the still-wet clay, the animal's tracks were pressed a good half-inch or more into it. In some spots they had stripped grass off the clay. The prints were more than double the size of one left by

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Deckard's big German shepherd. Moore and Howell said the dog was in the back yard when they spotted the strange animal. The dog was only 30 feet from it, but it wasn't barking. Instead, it was standing stock-still. *"It was twice as big as that dog,"* Howell recalled. *"I've never seen an animal like that in my life. It scared the crap out of me."*

At nearby Hardin Ridge Store, employee Christi Kline said the sighting was the third she'd heard of in the past six months to a year, all describing the same animal. She said a woman had seen it at the Hardin Ridge area entrance and that it didn't seem to show any fear and didn't run away.

Kline also said that one night a delivery man came in shaking with fear and saying he had just seen "Bigfoot." *"We know it's not Bigfoot, but whatever it was, it scared him,"* she said. Moore, Howell and Deckard also dismissed any Bigfoot notions, saying it was clearly an animal. *"I don't believe in no Bigfoot or nothin',"* Moore said.

Veteran state conservation officer Marlin Dodge said that a so-called Bigfoot sighting wouldn't be unusual. *"I've had a lot of complaints over the years on a Bigfoot, a lot of 'em in that area,"* he said. Dodge and three other wildlife biologists offered no explanation of what folks have seen. But they were not discounting the possibility that some non-native animal is in the area.

PRIMAL SCREAM

CNN have been following the progress of a National Geographical Society expedition in search of a new species of ape in the Congo. The following is a transcript of a broadcast on the 3rd February 2002:

FREDRICKA WHITFIELD, CNN ANCHOR:
Scientists working in the Congo are tracking a mystery. They've heard about a creature that's like nothing they've ever seen. As CNN's Gary Striker reports, their hunt for the truth relies on science and legend.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

GARY STRIEKER, CNN CORRESPONDENT
(voice over): Deep inside the forest, three hours on foot from the nearest path, the territory of the mystery

ape.

KARL AMMANN, WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER:
It's the beginning of the start of a riverbed and it's pretty soft here, and here we regularly find tracks.

STRIEKER: Tracks, larger than that of any primate known to live here. This is where it sleeps.

AMMANN: Here's an interesting combination. This is a ground nest about two days old, and then there's a tree nest of the same age group just next to it. That's a pretty low tree nest.

STRIEKER: Here in North Central Congo, scientists are puzzled by what they find. In a forest populated by chimpanzees that normally build sleeping nests high in the trees, there's evidence of large apes as big as gorillas that sleep on the ground just like gorillas.

They mystery is that gorillas are not supposed to be found here in a region hundreds of miles from the ranges of the eastern and western lowland gorillas. Wildlife photographer Karl Ammann has studied this puzzle for years, collecting reports from local villagers describing huge apes that sleep on the ground, exposed to danger, so powerful they have no fear of predators like lions, hyenas, or leopards.

This hunter says he's seen them but they don't look like gorillas pictured in this book. Early last year, Ammann organized an expedition, bringing leading scientists here to study the evidence but their findings are still inconclusive.

So far, remote triggered cameras have photographed only chimpanzees, and analysis of mitochondrial DNA in hair and fecal samples, indicates the ground sleeping ape is a chimpanzee.

AMMANN: This is a chimp too.

STRIEKER: This skull, found in the area, has teeth as small as a chimpanzee's but it also has a sagittal (ph) crest at the top, unlike a chimpanzee but just like a gorilla.

STRIEKER (on camera): These could be nesting sites of a great ape that's not yet been recognized by science, apparently not a small type of gorilla, but probably some kind of chimpanzee that grows extremely large.

STRIEKER (voice over): One theory, the mystery ape could be a hybrid.

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AMMANN: So if you had a male gorilla integrating himself with a bunch of chimps and breeding, which I'm told is theoretically possible, then that wouldn't show in the mitochondrial DNA, which is passed on from the mother. So all the tests we have done wouldn't tell us if we had a hybrid population of some kind.

STRIKER: More DNA testing will check the hybrid theory, and more field expeditions will continue the search for the mystery ape. Gary Striker, CNN, in the Bondal Forest (ph) Congo.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

TO ORDER A VIDEO OF THIS TRANSCRIPT, PLEASE CALL 800-CNN-NEWS OR USE OUR SECURE ONLINE ORDER FORM LOCATED AT www.fdcch.com

PETITE PERSIANS

The *Tehran Times* of 8th June 2002 carried a story, which for some reason we found rather amusing. We quote it in full: "*The Information Center of the Tehran Province Disciplinary Headquarters announced that reports about 30-centimeter tall dwarves in Karaj are totally baseless. The Central News Agency investigated reports that several of the dwarves were seen in Mehrshahr, Karaj Township and discovered that people were only spreading rumors and that no one had actually seen the dwarves.*"

MR KIPLING NAMES EXCEEDINGLY GOOD WILD BOYS

A real-life Mowgli has been discovered in Romania after villagers spotted a boy eating a dead dog. The child is believed to have lived alone in the country's forests for years. He is the size of a normal three-year-old but doctors believe he is seven. The boy was found close to a village in the Brasov region of the country. According to the daily National newspaper, a family found him eating from a dead dog's head. The child cannot speak and was completely naked and living in a box. Doctors said he had been lucky to survive by himself. The boy was underdeveloped and

undemourished but is expected to make a full recovery.

Police have started an investigation to establish the boy's identity. Hospital personnel have decided to call him Mowgli until his real name is discovered.

Source: Ananova Wednesday 13th February 2002

However, this was only the beginning of a whole spate of wild children..

An uncredited Internet posting on Apr 15, 2002 told the story of a disabled Nigerian boy who was believed to have been adopted and raised by chimpanzees for 18 months. Named Bello by nursing staff at the *Tudun Maliki Torrey* home in Kano, he was brought to them six years ago by hunters after being found with a family of chimpanzees in the Falgore forest, 150 km further south.

Mentally and physically disabled, with a misshapen forehead, sloping right shoulder and protruding chest, he was probably abandoned by his parents because of his disabilities, Isa Muhammad said. Such abandonments of disabled children are common among the nomadic Fulani, a pastoralist people who travel great distances across the west African Sahel region, and in most instances the children die. But in Bello's case, he was apparently adopted by a family of chimpanzees, Isa Muhammad said.

"We do not know exactly how long he would have been with the chimps. Based on the traits he exhibits, we estimate that he would have been adopted when he was no more than six months old and nursed by a nursing chimp," commented the welfare officer.

When he was first brought in, Bello, who is about the size and weight of a four-year-old, walked in a chimpanzee-like fashion, moving on his hind legs but dragging his arms on the ground, the home's matron, A'isha Ibrahim, said.

Then on the 20th June AAP reported that another feral child had been spotted in Australia. Internet wags suggested that he must have been raised by yowies, and Richard nicknamed him "Kid Thylacine" (which irresistibly reminded yer editor of a song by *Steely Dan*).

However the story is interesting enough by anyone's standards. A police spokeswoman said that a motorist had reported seeing a boy aged around nine or ten running across the Mt Mee Road about 11pm (AEST)

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on the previous day. The child, reportedly naked, then disappeared into thick bushland.

The next day *Ananova* reported that doctors in Kazakhstan are baffled after finding a six-year-old boy covered in ape-like hair. The boy, called Ablay, was found in a remote mountain village close to the Chinese border. He is covered in thick hair from head to toe and has an oval shaped skull. Doctors suspect nuclear radiation or a genetic disorder may be responsible. Ablay was found by a visiting team of doctors holding a medical camp for children in the village of Terymagash.

They believe he is suffering from a rare and incurable condition known as hypertrichos.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Possibly Hyperthyroidism? (Also known as cretinism). However this disease is not uncommon and one would have thought that any paediatrician worth his salt would have recognised a child suffering with this endocrine disorder.

His mother said village elders advised them to send their son to the circus but she wanted him to go to school. She said: *"His life will be full of difficulties. Looking in the mirror will bring him pain. He will be ridiculed and mocked."* Doctors from Aksay hospital said the boy has surprising mobility, flexibility, sociability, a kind of special intuition and a unique sense of direction.

CTHONIAN FREAKSHOW

The Philippines Star reported on February 24th that a series of ancient humanoid skulls boasting a single cyclopean eye socket had been found in limestone caves have baffled tribal folk in the hinterlands of Bohol, Bukidnon and Agusan, reports said. The existence of the skulls, which resemble those of the cyclops, a race of giants in Greek mythology with a single eye in the middle of the forehead, has triggered speculations that one-eyed ancient settlers once roamed the country's southern islands. Tribal folklore has it that giants once roamed the plains of Central and Northern Mindanao, the most popular of whom, according to Bukidnon legend, was "Agyo" who fought against the first Spanish conquistadores.

Bukidnon's tribal folk are reportedly keeping skeletal

remains which they believe to be Agyo's as an object of worship in a sacred cave. Reports about the strange skulls had prompted archeologists of the National Museum to launch an excavation in Bohol and they, indeed, found one such skull.

Archeologist Rey Santiago said intensive study on the skull showed it belonged to an ancient settler. He, however, theorized that limestone in caves where the "cyclops skulls" were discovered could have triggered a chemical reaction in the skeletal part, creating a new eyeball socket.

Despite Santiago's explanation though, tribal folklore maintain there were two races of giants in ancient times - the kapre who were associated with evil, and the one-eyed giants whom early settlers regarded as their heroes. The skulls were later reburied.

STARCHILD ii (this time it's personal)

UFO ROUNDUP (Volume 7, Number 6) reported on February 5, 2002 that a mysterious skull, with many similarities to Lloyd Pye's legendary *Starchild* skull has been found in Bulgaria. It was found buried in the Rhodopes mountain range in southern Bulgaria on May 21, 2001 and apparently the news magazine BTA published a photo of the skull although we have not yet seen a copy of the picture.

Their Bulgarian correspondent reported:

"The strange skull is as large as a baby's. There are six cavities (orifices) in it, but none of them resembles a mouth. The skull weighs 250 grams and its bones are lighter and thinner than the skull bones of the average Homo sapiens.

The skull "was found by a 38-year-old resident of Plovdiv," a mid-sized city about 150 kilometers (90 miles) southeast of Sofia, "who requested anonymity. Bulgarian archaeologist Katya Malamet has disputed the article which originally appeared in the Turkish newspaper Milliyet. "Archaeologist Katya Malamet, a member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, said she had never seen such a thing.

The director of the Paleontology Museum in Asenovgrad, Dimitar Kovachev, is positive that the find

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is no fossil and has no analogy" or resemblance to any hominid skull known to science.

"Anthropologist Prof. Yordan Yordanov believes that the skull doesn't look like any human cranium known to science for the past 30 million years." The mysterious skull was discovered in 1991.

BIGFOOT FORKS OFF

Ananova reported on the 17th June that a man spotted the hairy, human-like creature near his house in Forks, Washington State. An animal-control officer and Forks police carried out a search but found no trace of the Sasquatch. *"We were unable to locate, identify or capture the Sasquatch,"* said Forks Police Chief Mike Powell. He said it was a relief because he wouldn't know how to deal with a Bigfoot. Mr Powell said: *"I don't know why we would impound him or where we would keep him?"*

NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES

According to UPI, on 22nd June 2001, large footprints have been found in a forest on the shores of Hudson Bay in Canada, indicating that Bigfoot may be living there.

Each footprint *"was 14 inches or so [long] and five inches wide,"* according to Abraham Hunter, chief of the Weemusk First Nation in Peawanuck in Ontario, about 1,000 miles north of Toronto. There *"were quite a few of them, more than twenty"* and they headed toward the Winisk River. They were about two yards apart, indicating that the creature had a very large stride, and they were definitely not bear tracks. *"A bear would have four different footprints,"* says Hunter.

The prints were first sighted by a member of the tribe as he drove a four-wheeler through the Polar Bear Provincial Park, one of Ontario's largest wildlife preserves. Since then, several other people from the Weemusk Nation have examined the prints.

The creature left no hair on any shrubs as it passed by, but the footprints sank deeply into the soil, indicating that it was big and heavy. *"It's not just in one area"* that the footprints were sighted, says Hunter. *"There's*

about 3 different areas, one about 2 miles away and another 1.25 miles away."

The creature has even been seen. *"About 20 years ago, there was a sighting about 15 or 12.5 miles [sic] downstream,"* says Hunter. The next day, people in the area went to the spot and *"did find footprints, 16 inches in length. It looked like a man" and was "heading toward the bush."*

An area supervisor for the Ontario Natural Resources Ministry, along with two other people, went to the spot where the new footprints were found and took photographs. *"They are sending the photographs down for us to have a look,"* says Brett Kelly, who works for the ministry in Toronto. *"Apparently, there have been 16 other sightings in the province of Ontario."* While the officials were in the Peawanuck area, *"our ministry staff saw a second set [of prints] 93 miles east. There was a sighting last year, in 1999, and a previous sighting to that in the western part of the province,"* he adds. Of the latest sighting, he says, *"I think it's quite heavy, because it left quite a deep footprint, but there's no estimation of what the actual size of it is."*



THE CRATER LAKE MONSTER

The Crater Lake Monster of Orgeon has once again reared its ugly head, this time to a local woman. When Mrs. Hatcher visited the lake, she was living in Oregon's Hood River Valley. Folk from there often went boating on Crater Lake. Mrs. Hatcher was looking over the side of the rowboat when she saw it and felt her heart freeze. Others in the boat saw it too. They were as frightened by it as Mrs. Hatcher. It swam deep down in the lake, and it was unbelievably big.

"That thing must have been a block long" she said. "I have never been so scared in my life. What we saw that day was a monster. To me, it looked like a dragon. I

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know why the Indians call that place Lost Lake. They say monsters live in it. I believe them. I know, because I saw one there."

Mrs. Hatcher and her friends got to shore as fast as they could row. They told their story, but nobody really believed them. To Mrs. Hatcher, that does not matter. She knows that the story is true, because she was there. SOURCE:

<http://www.news-press.com/news/today/020501travel.html>

GOD SAVE THE MASQUERADE

It had to happen. In 1977, the newspapers printed Tony Shiels's classic Loch Ness photos with the heading "Up for the Jubilee". On the 9th June, the BBC reported that Nessie hunters attempted to find the Loch Ness monster - using the Queen's Golden Jubilee baton.

It was lowered into the loch during its five-day tour round Scotland but failed to find any sign of a heartbeat in the murky depths. However, organisers reported seeing "something pretty weird" as the baton neared the surface.

The Jubilee baton, which contains a device that can detect a pulse rate, was lowered 220 metres to the bottom of the loch from a boat. Images of the baton underwater were beamed onto screens aboard another vessel, the Jacobite Queen, which was carrying about 100 guests.

Event director Di Henry said there was "a strange interruption" as the baton neared the surface again.

"There was a thing in front of the camera," she said. "It looked pretty wooden. It could have been wood or seaweed or it could have been Nessie." And she added: "I'm not so sure we didn't see something. It was pretty weird what we saw. I wouldn't want to overstate it, but it wasn't something I expected myself."

The baton arrived in Scotland on Saturday morning as it continued a 58,000-mile journey which has already taken it through more than 20 Commonwealth countries.

TIZ IN TAS

The Tasmania Mercury reported on the 2nd January this year that the monster of Lake Dulverton in Tasmania seems to have returned.



THE MERCURY

New life, new hope ... and an old joke

THE OLD AND THE NEW

JAMES MORRISON TICKETS PLEASE PAGE 31

MARY PIERCE OUT BACK PAGE

"People are pointing fingers everywhere," said Tony Cawthorn, from the Friends of Lake Dulverton group.

"But it's a mystery how she got there."

Albert Darkin, whose wife runs the local tea-rooms, went down to the lake after customers gushed about seeing a hump-backed monster in the water all day. And a visitor to the lake said: *"I think I saw her move."*

Years ago, the 230 ha. lake was a statewide focal point for rowing, swimming, fishing, sailing and water-skiing, and was the attraction that brought many residents to Oatlands in the first place.

But in the 1980s, rains were not enough to fight off evaporation. The lake dried up and became a shrivelled

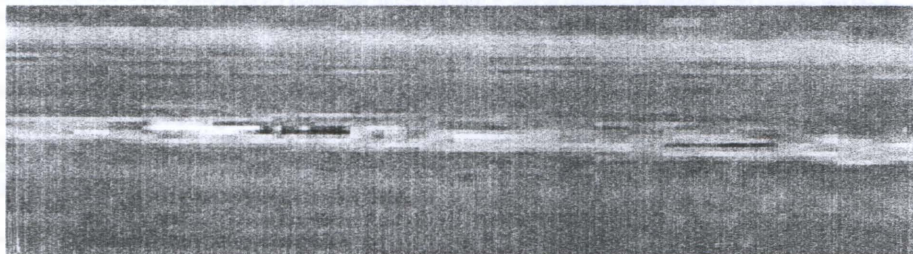
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eyesore, and stayed that way for a good 14 years. But in the 1990s, a plan was hatched to revive the lake, and locals pitched in to build a dam wall and lay a pipe to pump it with water.

The lake slowly started to return to life, in the process drawing back some of the prolific birdlife that made it a wildlife sanctuary in 1929.

We have been unable to find any references in the literature to any history of monster sightings in the area, and so, especially in view of the patently obvious faked photographs which accompanied the article, we are forced to speculate that this may well be part of a successful attempt to attract more visitors to the lake.

OGOPOGO: SERPENT SURFACES ON CELLULOID



A film crew was partway through a re-creation of an Ogopogo sighting 24 years ago when what appeared to be the real thing made a surprise appearance. About 10 a.m. Thursday, Tripod Film and Video Productions of Kelowna started taping a scene showing Bill Steciuk's 1978 sighting at the west of Okanagan Lake Bridge. His son, Rob, played the role of Ogopogo observer.

"I guess we were half-way through when we saw two or three humps undulating in and out of the water," said the older Steciuk who was an adviser for the shoot. "Everyone was just screaming. I was dumbfounded. It was almost exactly at the same spot, a little further away, a little more west." The lake was completely calm on both sides of a wake about 200 metres from their vantage point, said Steciuk who took a series of photographs with his 35-mm. camera.

"It's one thing to have this group of 14 of us hyped as we looked at something. I wanted to see what was on the film," he said.

That night, he and others returned to Tripod's production facilities to examine the tape.

"It's a pretty clear shot, about a minute-and-a-half on a broadcast quality Panasonic camera. My (Can Pro Productions) partner, Len Melnyk, was absolutely positive that it was not a wave or a boat wake but something under the water," said Steciuk.

There were also several sequences on the film showing a projection, *"something sideways, something strange" on the hump. It couldn't have worked out better. When people hear about this, they'll think we staged it, but it's impossible,"* admitted Steciuk.



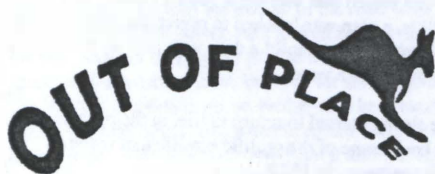
TONIGHT THEY SAIL FROM SINGAPORE

On Thursday 18th April Peter Ng, the director of a museum on biodiversity at the National University of Singapore, said that the last two endemic subspecies in Singapore - the Cream-colored Giant Squirrel and the Banded Leaf Monkey are facing imminent extinction. *"In the old days both animals were listed as common. They numbered in the comfortable thousands,"* he said. Less than 20 Banded Leaf Monkeys and no more than four squirrels still live in what is left of the tiny island

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nation's forests, Ng said. *"We're pretty sure they're kaput,"* he says. A representative from Singapore's national parks board said the country is working with local groups to study and protect the animals. But with only three percent of the island set aside for parks, efforts to breed the animals in captivity and reintroduce them to the forests will fail, Ng said.

"Even if you do bring them back in the zoo, what do you do? You can't release them back into the wild because there's so little of it," he said. *"It's the price of urbanization."*



THE NAMELESS OFFSPRING

MISSING LYNX

A mystery disease is reported to have claimed the lives of a number of Iberian lynxes in a nature reserve in south west Spain. There are now thought to be just 20 left in the Donana National Park. It is one of only two places where the animal still breeds. According to the conservation group SOS Lynx, there are also growing fears the 'European Tiger' may have disappeared from the Montes de Toledo mountains south of Madrid. There were an estimated 100 animals there five years ago but current camera-trapping efforts have failed to locate a single lynx. In Portugal, researchers believe there may be just one lynx left at the Serra da Malcata national park, the only other lynx reserve on the Iberian peninsula. The population has fallen in recent years because of habitat destruction, hunting, and diseases that have wiped out rabbits, which make up 85% of the lynx's diet.

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) now officially classifies the Iberian lynx as the most endangered cat in the world. SOS Lynx says the species could die out if there is no captive breeding programme. Spokesman Eduardo Goncalves, said:

"The entire species now consists of fewer than 300 individual animals wandering around in desperate search of food and shelter.

Many of them are starving or too weak to breed. Virtually all of the cubs born in the last few years have been shot, run over on highways, or mutilated in traps."

SOURCE: *Ananova*: Monday 25th March 2002

The *Yorkshire Post* for 19th April reported that two rare, luminous Yellow Irish Slugs have crawled into the record books by making a first appearance in South Yorkshire. They were found miles apart in gardens at Rossington and Kirk Sandall by curious gardeners who took them to Doncaster Museum for identification. Brian Eversham, who was running a slug workshop at the museum, identified them as Irish Yellow Slugs, or *Limax Maculata*. The museum's keeper of environmental records Colin Howes was delighted to discover that it was the first recorded sighting of them in Doncaster. "The slugs probably travelled over on a pot plant or with a horticultural product, although of course it's difficult to be certain. *"What we do know is that they are a very recent visitor, in the 1970s the Yellow Irish Slugs were confined to Ireland and there had been only one sighting of them on mainland Britain and that was in Wales."* Both have now been released back into the wild.

TITAN FROM THE ABYSS

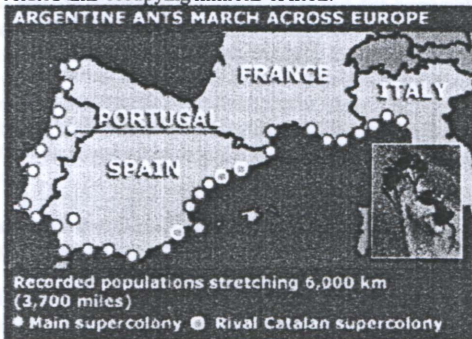
Reuters on July 2nd 2002 announced that a snapping turtle has been caught in a Munich lake from where it has been handed over to Munich University's Zoological Institute. The snapping turtle, known as 'Dornie', is thought to have been bought in a pet shop and later released into Dornach lake, where he lived for at least a decade, reaching 32 inches in length on a diet of fish, frogs and rats. Police banned swimming in the lake and issued a warning after a worried local man showed them a photograph of the large turtle, and after a two-week search by police, firemen and fishermen, a passerby grabbed Dornie and dragged him ashore. From the description, it seems that Dornie is probably an alligator snapping turtle (*C. serpentina*).

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TURN OFF THE JUKEBOX AND DO US ALL A FAVOUR



A species of Argentine ant introduced into Europe about 80 years ago has developed the largest supercolony ever recorded. It stretches 6,000 kilometres - from northern Italy, through the south of France to the Atlantic coast of Spain - with billions of related ants occupying millions of nests.



While ants from rival nests normally fight each other to the death, ants from the supercolony have the ability to recognise each other and co-operate - even if they

come from nests at opposite ends of the colony's range. The Argentine species (*Linepithema humile*) probably came into Europe on imported plants, pushing back the 20 or so indigenous species of European ant.

And finally, Richard...



A Belgian company has developed a vibrator for pigs. The device is aimed at making it more pleasant and easier for sows to undergo artificial insemination. The MS Reflexator sexually stimulates the pig to allow sperm from the boar to glide more easily into her uterus. Its Bladel-based creators, Schippers, say they found inspiration in human vibrators used close to home. A spokesman told the *Gazet van Antwerpen*: "We know some people who use a vibrator regularly. Then we thought how we could make it useful for pigs." Surprisingly perhaps, the CFZ really have no comment to make.

OBITUARIES

THOR HEYERDAHL 1914-2002



The renowned Norwegian explorer and archaeologist Thor Heyerdahl has died of cancer at the age of 87. He passed away in his family home at Colla Micheri, northern Italy, after a long illness.

Heyerdahl had undergone surgery last year, but it failed to halt his disease. He was admitted to hospital in March when the cancer spread to his brain.

Thor Heyerdahl was born in Southern Norway in 1914. After studying zoology and geography at university he married and, in 1936, travelled with his new wife to the Marquesan archipelago in Pacific.

He spent a year in the Marquesas, living off the land and studying the local flora and fauna of this remote island group.

His greatest achievement will always be seen as his 1947 expedition when he skippered the tiny balsawood raft *Kon Tiki* on a 6,000 kilometre journey from Peru to Polynesia, in a succesful attempt to prove that ancient cultures could have sailed to, and populated, the South Pacific. During that journey he discovered several new species of fish, and sighted several others which have yet to be identified by science.

The *Kon-Tiki* expedition caught the imagination of a world enduring post-war austerity. The film of the expedition won Thor Heyerdahl an Oscar for best documentary, the book sold 60 million copies worldwide. He followed his epic journey with archaeological expeditions in other parts of the world.

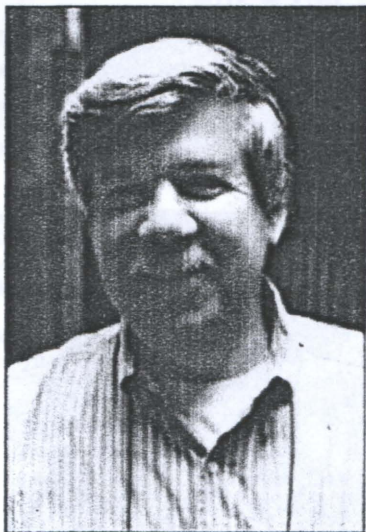
A committed internationalist, he always travelled with a multinational crew and always flew the flag of the United Nations. Thor Heyerdahl's expeditions

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fostered a close understanding of the global environment and he voiced his concern at the increasing problem of pollution which he had encountered even in the middle of the world's oceans .

"We seem to believe the ocean is endless," he said, "but we use it like a sewer." He was undoubtedly one of the greatest explorers of modern times, and his exploits have been a constant inspiration to us all at the CFZ. He will be sadly missed, and the world will undoubtedly be a poorer place for his passing.

STEPHEN JAY GOULD 1942-2002



Stephen Jay Gould, one of the world's best-known scientists and a witty, prolific author who influenced the current thinking on evolution and science standards in schools has died of cancer at his home in New York City at the age of 60.

Gould, a Harvard University professor, joined the faculty in 1967 as a professor of geology. He advanced to associate professor in 1971 and to professor in 1973. Gould was a best-selling author who was enamored of the mysteries of evolution. He was known for his engaging, often witty style evident in his collections of essays, which included *"Ever Since Darwin"*, *"The Panda's Thumb"*, and *"The Mismeasure of Man"*, a study of intelligence testing and winner of the National Book Critics Award in 1982.

One of his most-championed causes was the idea of "punctuated equilibria" in which he emphasized that evolution consisted of relatively rapid spurts of species evolution rather than gradual, continuous transformations.

also lost but not forgotten..

RIP

FRANK TOVEY (aka Fad Gadget)

One of the most enigmatic British musicians of the last twenty five years – someone who never achieved the commercial greatness he deserved

DEE DEE RAMONE

The Bassplayer with Nick Redfern's favourite band, and author of some of their most bizarrely forteen zoological songs

JOHN ENTWHISTLE

'The quiet one' of *The Who* – about the only one of the band who didn't seem destined for an early grave. His skills redefined rock bassplaying and his elegantly macabre songwriting enriched our lives and record collections.

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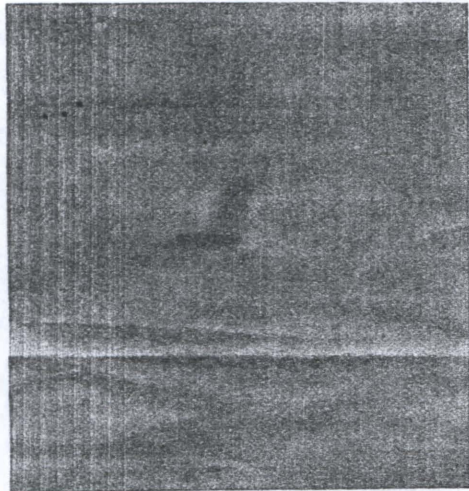
MORGAWR RETURNS?

**Little pricks and a shag or –
August comes early in 2002 for
- the *Cornish Guardian*.**

By Paul Crowther

For those of you who don't live in Cornwall I have important news for you. While the rest of you have been going "Bananas" over the Golden Jubilee, the English Football team and dare I write it ("Go on Paul write it" I hear you say) Tim "Bloody" Henman. The people of Cornwall have been smouldering away in the toe end of England. Firstly, Johnny "Two Jabs" Prescott mumbled something about regional councils, then said that Cornwall could not have one – the result, an instant petition of complaint signed by nearly the whole population of Cornwall or rather those that still talk in Gallic. Then there was the thorny issue of that great tourist attraction the Beast of Bodmin. Not much news on that front, but that's Ok because the tourist figures

are on the up. What the tourist industry needs is a boost from another direction. Something, which that illegitimate Crowther could not screw up for them.



Mystery creature of Cornish legend

by RAY TELFORD

EXPERTS are debating whether this could be the first video sighting of fabled Cornish sea serpent Morgawr.

John Holmes, of Sticker, filmed the mystery creature in Gerrans Bay on a warm, sunny August evening in 1989, but only this week made the film public.

He says the footage shows the head of a creature about a metre above the waves with an estimated length of about 2.2 metres and about 200 metres from the shoreline.

Mr Holmes, a former member of staff of the British Museum's natural history unit, said: "I can only describe the head and neck as being serpentine, with a small, flattened reptilian head that was very mobile."

"The creature was above water for only a very brief period, so the film is rather short, but I believe this could be the first piece of video evidence for the existence of the great Cornish sea serpent Morgawr."

Mr Holmes says that because of business commitments and a "basic fear of ridicule", he never approached ichthyological experts until April last year.

He said: "Since then I've approached a number of qualified experts and they all seem somewhat puzzled as to the identity of the creature - so it remains an unsolved mystery."

Monster

According to ancient Cornish folklore the legendary sea monster Morgawr, like its Scottish freshwater relative the Loch Ness Monster, is a zoological conundrum with sightings reported over many generations.

Video expert Tim Farnes, of St Austell-based TJP Productions, who has studied the original video, said: "The film is totally genuine - it hasn't been 'doctored' in any way."

"Although it is not my field of expertise, I believe this is an animal and certainly isn't just an inanimate or floating object in the water."

Newquay Zoo curator Mike Thomas, who together with University of Plymouth wildlife and zoology lecturers Paul Crowther and Chris Moser will this week study the video in greater detail, said a sighting of a similar sea creature was reported recently off the south Cornish coast.

"The video is interesting in that it ties in very nicely with a sighting off Falmouth six weeks ago by two experienced boatmen of a long-necked creature they spotted in the sea."

"They are very reliable witnesses who wouldn't have panicked and made something out of nothing, or tried to perpetuate a hoax."

"There's every possibility that this could well be the same creature that was first sighted, again off Falmouth, in the early 1970s."

"All sorts of things poke their heads or tails out of the sea which are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to identify."

"But any sighting like this has to be well worth examining in greater depth," said Mr Thomas.



The two close-up pictures above, have been cropped from the sea scenes videoed by John Holmes.



FOSTER
FORT

You could make

Cornwall urgently need term, short term and re

Jamie
aged 14 years needs a

Jenny
aged 10 years needs a her own family due to

Tommy
aged 7 years needs a ti and breaks during holi

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So what did they come up with this time – Morgawr or as the *Western Morning News* put it – “The West Country Nessie” (Blimy, I can hear the sound of flapping plastic bags on car roof racks thundering down the A30 as I write!)

Just my luck, unbeknown to me I had been volunteered by Mike Thomas of Newquay Zoo, as an expert to examine the video footage and give an opinion to the Cornish Guardian on the videos’ contents. So, to cut a very long story short I found my self in this fellow’s spare bedroom looking at videos! (It’s Ok, the room was the mans video lab, and wow what a lab. It was just like being in the “*Man who fell to Earth*”) Once I had found a TV screen that I could focus on I sat back and got myself into a suitable “cosmic” state. First I watched the footage at normal speed. Very interesting! In the video, the operator clearly states that he thinks he was filming a “Killer Whale”. I wonder, how does the man go from “Killer Whale to Morgawr in three years? (The footage was shot in the summer of ’99) Then I watched it one frame at a time. Next I was asked to give my opinion on the footage as I watched it again one frame at a time. In the three minutes of footage (including footage of the cameraman’s wife floating in the sea {she was alive and not the subject of the enquiry, I hasten to add}) I managed to change my opinion four times. In chronological order my guesses were - 1/ A wooden sleeper used for ballast in a ship. 2/ A sea bird, a Shag (Hence second part of the title). 3/ A seal, and fourth, and most importantly of all – not a F***ing clue. I left my newly acquired video friend in agreement that probably someone will look at the stills from the video which were to be published in the following evenings’ Cornish Guardian and say “*That’s a*”

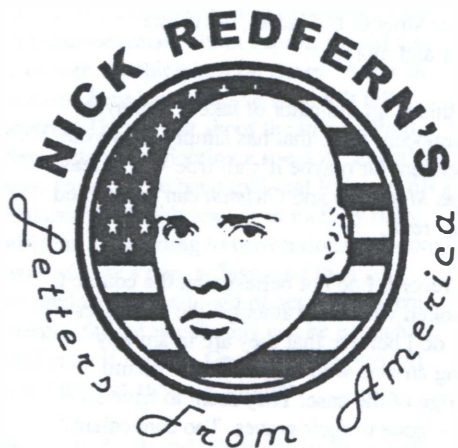
That night I didn’t sleep that well. It felt as if someone was pricking me in various intimate parts of my body, (See the first part of the title) fortunately my wife assured me it was not her trying to wake me up do the squishy thing v her. Voodoo I thought! This is a sign that 20 going to crack this little problem. (You can tell, I am very sensitive to cosmic vibes).

Sure enough the following day I met a Zoology graduate from Birmingham University in a pet shop, (as you do). The man took one look at the pictures in the paper and said – “That’s a Sun fish”! There then followed a series of phone calls to the MBA at Plymouth, and other marine specialists who all thought my effort at subject identification was about 95% correct.

There then followed an extremely short interview with a DJ called Laurence on Radio Cornwall, I must confess he was not too impressed with my analysis of the videos content. Come to think of it neither was the wife of the man who had shot the video, she hung up when I told her the results of my investigation. However the cameraman called a few days later and I think it is fair to say we parted amicably and agreed to differ on the videos’ content.

I can live with a 95% probability of the videos’ contents being a Sun Fish, because just a few weeks ago two new species of monkey were discovered on land and who else lives on land – yep you have guessed it –Man. Now man doesn’t live in the sea, yet! So the number of unidentified species living in the oceans is incalculable, so this leaves a 5% possibility that the video could be of, as the *Western Morning News* put it – The Cornish Nessie! But, sorry not this time, good effort, but just like the “Beast of Bodmin” – keep the footage and pictures coming in, some day we will see the real thing and I don’t mean a bottle of Coke!

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THE TEXAN GARGOYLES

In my last column, I revealed that whilst living in the Texas town of Littlefield for several months in 2001 (we recently moved to Port Arthur, near Houston, however), I heard from two people a bizarre story concerning sightings of alleged Gargoyles in the area! This has provoked a number of emails from a variety of researchers wondering what on earth (or possibly off it!) this is all about. Well, as a certain famous person once said: *I know not what the truth may be; I tell the tale as 'twas said to me.* But here goes.

The details came from an elderly couple that have lived in Littlefield (and for a while in the nearby town of Levelland) all of their lives. When my wife and I first moved to the town in late 2001 I contacted the local media to say that I was looking to obtain any interesting stories of a paranormal, UFO and

cryptozoological nature from anyone in the area that might be interested in speaking with me. This was to bring forth a number of interesting incidents that I am still following up on – including one of a “White Bigfoot” supposedly seen in the area several years ago. But to the main crux of the matter at issue.

In addition to receiving various reports of UFOs and ghostly encounters, I was contacted by the aforementioned elderly couple informing me that they recalled a distinctly unusual event that occurred when they were in their late teens in the mid-1940s. They were unable to remember the exact circumstances under which the story surfaced but it was one that had been told through the generations on the wife’s side of the family.

According to their account, the first incident occurred in the early months of 1946 at an old, large house that existed (but no longer exists – and why are they always old and large in stories such as this, hmmm?) on the edge of town and where two aged and eccentric sisters lived. Supposedly on one occasion in the dead of night (when else?) a group of kids playing in the area and scaring themselves stupid by walking around the old house (that was reputedly haunted too) had seen two eight-foot tall, gray-colored, humanoid creatures climb stealthily out of an underground storage area that existed on the property of the sisters (I will resist describing this as a “bunker” as it only over-excites the overly-conspiracy-minded and the *X-Files* crew).

Not only were the creatures eight foot tall and gray-skinned: they had large, leathery wings and glowing red eyes! They apparently turned sharply and stared intently at the kids as they surfaced from their underground lair, then broke into a hopping-style run, opened their wings and soared into the starlit sky! One interesting

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observation was that the limbs of the creatures looked, against the background of the moon, almost hollow.

Perhaps even weirder was the fact that as the kids exited the area at high speed, two of them caught sight of the two elderly sisters grinning manically at them out of a downstairs window of the house. The couple also informed me that a similar creature (if not one of the original two) was seen several months later standing in the middle of the local highway by a motorist in the early hours of the morning and issuing a woeful moan.

That, in essence, is the account. I have no idea if it is genuine but there are several points worth noting. The couple wanted no direct publicity and did indeed seem genuinely interested in relating the account. And, in my opinion, they were relating something from memory rather than 'trying to pull a fast one'.

As students of cryptozoology will also be keenly aware, this particular story has both *Mothman* and *Owlman* overtones to it of the type that your good editor has written about in his book, *The Owlman and Others*. Needless to say, I am continuing to dig into this story and have identified thirteen houses that existed on the outskirts of town half a century ago that no longer exist and I am chasing down all leads to try and take this story further.

At this stage, I concede that I don't know where it's leading but I will say that I don't believe (having met them on three, lengthy occasions) that the two prime sources of the story are faking it. But, it must be admitted that the account *does* have all the key ingredients of a horror story that you could ever want: a spooky old house; Moon-lit adventures in the dead of night; underground

chambers; sinister old ladies; devil-like monsters and more.

Maybe this is an indicator of fakery or maybe it's an innocent fable that has simply grown out of proportion. Or maybe it's all true – or at least as real as *Mothman* and *Owlman* can be verified as being 'real'.

For the record, I do not believe that the couple I have spoken with were amongst the witnesses and nor do I believe that they are in anyway shielding anyone who might have firsthand knowledge of the case. They seem to have all – by now – gone to their graves. Too convenient? Maybe. We'll see...

THE CALL OF CTHULLU?

Scientists have revealed an unusual audio recording that could potentially be the sound of a huge and unidentified beast lurking in the depths of the ocean. Researchers have nicknamed the strange sound picked up by undersea microphones as "Bloop." Whatever the creature is, say investigators, it is far too big for a whale and speculation has fallen upon a giant squid.

Bloop was first detected in 1997 by US Navy sensors that were designed to monitor the movements of Soviet Submarines at the height of the Cold War.

In the 1960s the U.S. Navy set up an array of underwater microphones, or hydrophones, around the globe to track Soviet submarines. The network was known as SOSUS, short for Sound Surveillance System. The listening stations still lie hundreds of yards below the

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ocean surface, at a depth where sound waves become trapped in a layer of water known as the "deep sound channel".

Of course, the overriding majority of the sounds detected can be explained as whales, ships or earthquakes, but some very low frequency noises have proved baffling - such as Bloop.

Christopher Fox of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Acoustic Monitoring Project at Portland, Oregon, has given the signals names such as Train, Whistle, Slowdown, Upsweep and even Gregorian Chant. Could Bloop be a giant squid?

The largest dead squid on record measured about 60ft including the length of its tentacles; however, speculation remains with respect to the exact length that these creatures are capable of reaching.

Intriguingly Phil Lobel, a marine biologist at Boston University, Massachusetts, doubts that giant squid are the source of Bloop.

"Cephalopods have no gas-filled sac, so they have no way to make that type of noise," he said. "Though you can never rule anything out completely, I doubt it."

The mystery continues...

Source: New Scientist, June 2002;
www.rense.com

CRYPTO X FILES IN OZ

It has been revealed that wildlife officials in Western Australia have been keeping a record of all reports of "strange animal sightings" in the State. The Department of Conservation and Land Management has a file dating back to the 1930s. Sightings contained within the file include several big cats and animals previously thought to be extinct such as the dog-like thylacine.

Utilising Australia's Freedom of Information laws, the database was discovered by a thylacine researcher, Michael Moss. A 1994 letter from Kevin Minson, the then environment minister at the time, was also released saying it was possible that small numbers of unidentified species did indeed exist in the wilds of Western Australia. Moss added: "A lot of farmers are convinced there is something out there. These are not people who go round shooting their mouths off." Source: www.ananova.com

The Centre for Fortean Zoology now has a permanent American Office. Now that the nomadic Redfern family have finally got a permanent address, so have we. Nick is trying to establish a state by state network of regional representatives similar to the county by county one we have in the UK. All offers of assistance, money or gratis Ramones bootlegs to:

Cfz (USA)

3313 Avenue D, Nederland,
Texas 77627,
USA

e-mail skywatcher4u@aol.com

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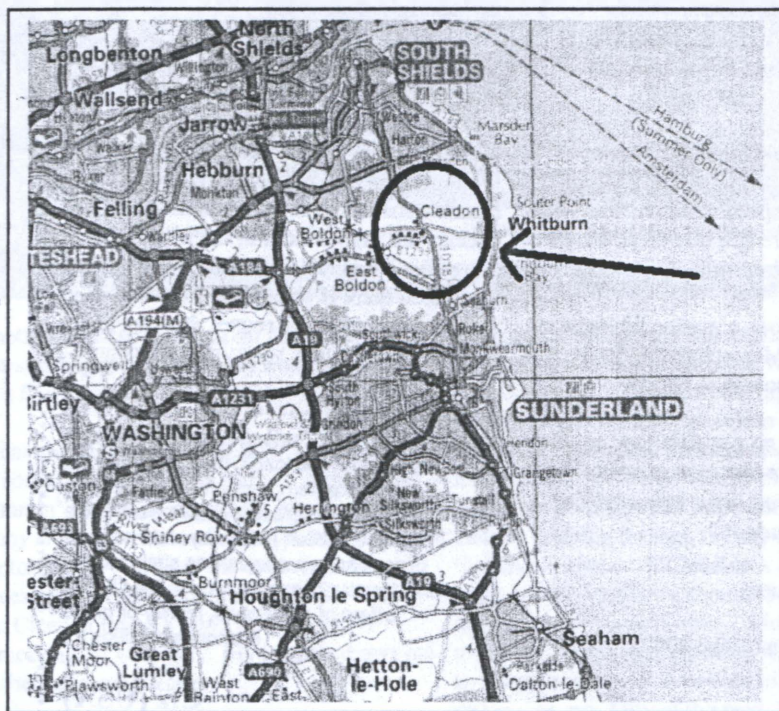
The Cleadon Puma

By Mike Hallowell

Several years ago, a puma appeared on Cleadon Hills.

Sunderland can boast of many things. Well, two actually; a naff football team and an absolutely abominable accent which sounds like a 45 rpm fire engine siren played at 33rpm.

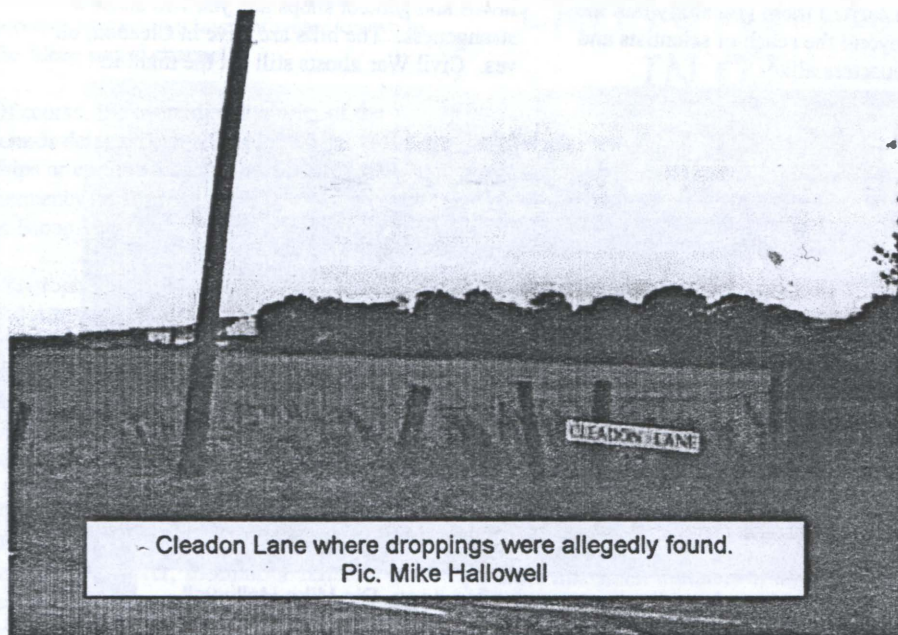
Cleadon is different. Cleadon is where the money people live. The locals ride horses, continually talk about Gavin and Fiona doing something in the city and have a strange compulsion to drop the phrases 'on the Algarve' and 'Must remember to pick my Ferrari up from the garage' into every sentence.



For those readers who are unfamiliar with the finer nuances of the Geordie geographical outlay, Cleadon is a village which lies twixt the City of Sunderland and the town of South Shields, in the County of Tyne & Wear.

Before Cleadoners start sharpening their very expensive kitchen knives ('When I'm cooking I refuse to use anything but Gunichi, dear; you can get them from Bainbridges and they'll only set you back £300 a set') I jest, actually. I live

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Cleadon Lane where droppings were allegedly found.
Pic. Mike Hallowell

near Cleadon, and can vouch forth that they are a canny lot. True, they do wallow in a copious amount of greenbacks, but a friendlier bunch of locals you'll not find anywhere. Cleadon folk are quite rich, but rarely pretentious. Cleadon's problem is that although it is an extremely nice place to live it is not at all sexy. Cleadon is beauty without wilderness, casserole without salt.

Well it used to be that way until the Puma appeared. Fellow wordsmith Iain Smith and I heard strange rumours in 1998 that a large wildcat was roaming around Cleadon Hills, a rural tract which overlooks the village. Locals were becoming disturbed. When one woman was frightened by the feline interloper whilst cutting the crusts off her cucumber sandwiches, something had to be done. Ian is a reporter with the Shields Gazette, and I am

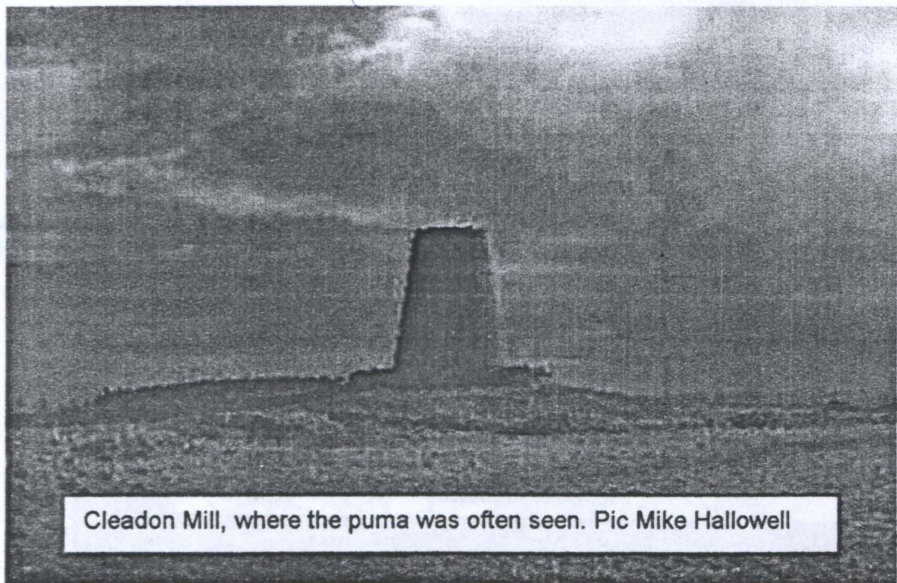
a freelance columnist for the same paper. We searched Cleadon hills Colonel Fawcett style, but to no avail. Nevertheless, we got some mileage out of the story. Headlines such as CLEADON BIG CAT NOT FOUND YET and CLEADON MAN DOESN'T SEE PUMA still excited the intestines of the local populace. But there, I'm jesting again, and I shouldn't be.

This story is about to take a serious turn. One of the original witnesses stated that the puma was rather unusual. Firstly, it had glowing red eyes. Secondly, the bottom half of the beast's legs were missing. And there was another thing. Oh yes; on one occasion it disappeared in a puff of cryptozoological smoke after crossing a main road. And then there was the puma pooh. Strange turds smelling of sulphur were reported to be sitting in nearby fields, patiently awaiting examination. Alas,

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heavy rain carried them gracefully into the soil and beyond the reach of scientists and intrepid reporters alike.

lawns and genteel shops and you will sense a strangeness. The hills are alive in Cleadon, oh yes. Civil War ghosts still cut the night in



Cleadon Mill, where the puma was often seen. Pic Mike Hallowell

Another witness said that on one occasion the puma changed colour, going from tan to black in a few seconds.

What are we to make of it all? That a wildcat of some description was roamin' through the gloamin' cannot be disputed. There were too many credible witnesses. The problem is that capturing the reality of the beast is not necessarily to understand its essence. Was the Cleadon puma a *bona fide* animal, or something far stranger? My instinct draws me to the latter conclusion.

Broadly speaking, the history of Cleadon Village is well documented. Pick up a copy of *Hodgson's History of South Shields*, and the facts about Cleadon are there for the imbibing. But there is more to Cleadon than facts. Walk away from the neatly manicured

these parts, and no one can explain why birds rarely sing near the abandoned WW II gun emplacements. To add to the high strangeness of Cleadon, we would do well to remember that the Black Helicopter Phenomenon has also manifested itself here. I know of two witnesses who have seen fleets of these unmarked aircraft silently cruising through the sky towards God knows where. If Cleadon is a truly Fortean place, then perhaps we should look for a Fortean answer to the puma mystery. I lean heavily towards the idea that the beast was – is – a zooform creature. It is neither of this dimension, nor fully of the next. The soul of the Cleadon Puma hangs between heaven and earth, defying logical explanation. According to some reports the Cleadon Puma is back. More accurately, it could be said that it never went away. Those who followed the exploits of the beast during its first incarnation are by no

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means certain that it ever left the area. One local businessman whom I spoke to told me, 'I've seen the thing several times. A few of us round here have, but we wouldn't tell anyone. They'd just shoot the thing.' Well, they could try. Shooting a spectral cat isn't easy, though. I've been told that trying to fill a zooform beast with lead is an awfully risky business. According to conventional wisdom, you just hear a pop, a flash, and then get deluged with a shed load of negative psychic energy - fallout which may just be enough to send you off into the Great Beyond yourself. Don't try this at home, kiddies.

The Twilight Worlds Paranormal Research Society, with its headquarters in nearby South Shields, is intrigued. Some members believe that it may be possible to make the beast manifest itself using several arcane techniques. Plans will be discussed at the next Directors' Meeting for an expedition to Cleadon Hills in the hope that we can get the zooform to appear. Then? Then we'll photograph its hairy ass a thousand times before it disappears into the ether again. Well, at least that's the plan. I'm pretty pissed off with zooforms nancing around and then bugging off before they can be scrutinised. It's been like this for centuries. Well, no more. We're mad as hell and we aren't going to take it. Using fair means or foul, we will corner the Cleadon Puma and snap a few for the family album. Readers of this journal will be the first to hear of the results. Personally I'm quite hopeful. Two TWPRS members - Graham McDougall and 'Little' John Black - have developed a consistently successful technique for filming certain types of paranormal phenomena. I am optimistic that this technique could well produce results on Cleadon Hills.

Watch this space.

THE WYRD WEEKEND 3rd-6th May 2002

My old mucker Dave "Geordie Dave" Curtis (booked to provide the music for the Friday night) turned up on the thursday night and got horribly drunk. He was drinking by the time I woke up on Friday morning so it was no surprise really that he found a kindred spirit in my cousin-in-law and they went off on a memorable binge and we didn't see either of them for most of the rest of the day.

The evening began chaotically as is the norm, and because of various transport problems people who were supposed to have arrived in Exeter at about 2 pm were phoning in to say that they wouldn't be here until much later, so we were running a little behind schedule. The punters slowly began to file in and by the time events kicked off properly just after half past eight the room was three quarters full. After an inspired opening speech by yours truly Richard Freeman presented his "Cabinet of Curiosities III". I had broken my own rules about no under fourteens because one bloke telephoned to ask if the event was suitable for a twelve year old girl.

As Richard's talk included the story of a humanoid called Kabaranka that lived in a hole in West Africa and eats human excrement I had my tongue firmly in cheek when I described the evening's entertainment as suitable for those of a tender age! Richard was followed by George Bishop from the CCCS talking about the 2001 crop circle which appeared to be a human face. Unfortunately because of the officious pricks from the guild of students we had to leave the venue betimes.

We therefore decamped to the Postgrad centre where we convened a panel consisting of Ian Simmons (who arrived half way through after a series of disasters), Malcolm Robinson from SPI, Nigel Wright (my old partner in crime), John Tindsley (Chaos Magician), Joe McGonagle (UfologyintheUK mailing list) and Larry "Rendlesham" Warren. The whole thing was chaired by me and Rich and seemed to go down quite well as everyone got slowly drunker.

Geordie Dave turned up just before midnight and the first night concluded in the traditional manner with drunken strummetty strum versions of Irish Rebel Songs.

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Sad news came in via Text Message. One of our speakers, Paul Harrison had to cancel because his father had suddenly died. As my mother had died only about six weeks ago I could sympathise with the poor fellow, and so the schedule for today has had to be hastily rejigged, but as I write, there is an hour to go until doors open and everything is looking groovy....

After a hasty rejig of the schedule because of Paul Harrison's Dad's sad demise, we kicked off Saturday morning about an hour late with an exquisitely gothic talk by Gail-Nina Anderson who did her own inimitable thing with aplomb and style. She was followed soon after by a workmanlike talk about the mechanics of folklore from Sam Richards. I am seriously looking forward to watching the videos of his performance 'cos it was too much to take in all at once especially when one is a fat forteen with a hangover and ones mobile phone rang practically every ten minutes.

BTW All the talks were videoed and will hopefully be available from me very soon at a surprisingly low price. To answer yer questions yup Rachel DID arrive safely although on Sunday she was rushed to hospital after it was discovered that eating bananas caused her to go into anaphalactic shock (but that is another story and she arrived back happy and healthy a couple of hours later to spend an evening in the boozier with us all).

Stepping into the breach at the last moment was my old mucker Nigel Wright (with whom I wrote a fabulous tome called 'The Rising of the Moon' which some of you may have read and which is now out of print). He gave an entertaining and informative talk called 'Oddities of UFOlogy' which was incredibly professional considering that he only had ten minutes to cobble it together. He recounted various amusing incidents from a thirty year career as a UFOlogist including the fact that British Rail (of all people) had lodged a patent for a flying saucer....

Then came a ridiculous Game Show type exercise put together by the wonderful Nichola Sullings. (Here I would like to say that if it ain't been for her none of this weekend would have happened). Two couples (Richard Freeman/Gail-Nina and Malcolm Robinson/Judy Jaffar competed in a ridiculous exercise whereby the two guys had to mime various forteen thingumijigs where the girls had to guess what the bloody hell they were doing).

Mal/Judy won, because Richard's impression of an alien giving someone an anal probe was just too weird for anyone to understand.

This was followed by Geordie Fortean God Mike Hallowell and the chilling story of the North East's own dragon cult which he claims (with a great deal of supporting evidence) was still being supported by human sacrifices well into the 1920s. Weird or what? Finally Malcolm Robinson, again doing his intense stage persona as a cross between Ian Paisley and Harry Price. He gave a mammoth talk covering his long career as a paranormal investigator. He talked about poltergeists, spiritualism, hauntings and all sorts of weird shit for well over 90 minutes (kindly carrying on over his allotted time as the band arrived to soundcheck).

Then.....Hooooooray!!!!!!

We went to Clydesdale House where everyone was entertained by a groovy set by "Square the Moon". Their groovy Steely Daneque stylings, however hardly prepared anyone for the sonic onslaught which was me and the "amphibians from outer space" playing our first gig in six years. We made a gloriously brutal noise. I swore, screamed, was horribly politically incorrect and ended the gig by rubbing my guitar against my amplifier in a disgustingly phallic manner as we played 'Louie Louie' in a hail of feedback as Richard F screamed an invocation to Great Cthullu with tomato ketchup on the palms of each hand as he played at being a stigmatic. I think I'm gonna enter the band in the next series of 'pop idol'

Sunday.....

The morning dawned fair. The birds were singing and God was in his heaven and all was right with the world. I didn't even have a hangover! Nigel and I went out to the cash and carry to replenish food supplies for Sunday's catering, and finished our shopping in record time and we happily drove to the venue. Then it started to rain and we discovered that Exeter had been crippled by a charity fun run, and that it was practically impossible to get from one side of the city to the other. Nedless to say we were stuck in the wrong side. The police were kind and helpful, but when a fat git dressed up as a pink bunny rabbit told us that we shouldn't mind being stuck in a queue for two hours because "its all for charidee innit?" it was hard not to be rude.

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Because of the events of the morning we were again running late.

John Tindsley gave a fascinating talk about the Elizabethan Occultist John Dee, and was quickly followed by WYRD Magazine Editor Bob Mann who presented an entertaining description of the life of Devonshire's best known proto forteen The Rev Sabine Baring-Gould. All good fun.

Lunch and various cigarette breaks followed, and then our old friend (and CFZ Zoological consultant) Chris Moiser from Plymouth CFE gave a fascinating talk on the subject of Victorian Travelling Menageries. Then came another legendary annual event THE QUILZ when Richard F grilled two teams (chosen arbitrarily by yours truly from the speakers and the home contingent) on their knowledge of "Monsters, Ghaiiirsts [sic] and UFOs". For the first time in three years the visiting team, captained as always by the lovely Judy Jaffar actually won! (It must be admitted that last year they only lost because the tie breaker was a question about the name of one of my pet cats!) The winners were presented by what Richard claimed was a jar of Ivan T Sanderson's phlegm.

Larry Warren gave a fascinating account of his involvement in the Rendlesham Forest UFO case. As always I was touched by the level of his sincerity. Larry's testimony is practically unique amongst those who claim close encounters as it makes me suspect that much against my better judgement, the truth might actually BE out there.

Ian Simmons finished off the afternoon with a fascinating lecture entitled "Sex at Room Temperature – the forteen aspects of Buffy the Vampire Slayer". Wonderfully his talk included references to vampire vegetables and fruit, and even vampiric garden tools. Great stuff.

We then decamped to the pub.

The next morning at eleven, various forteen folk braved the crappy weather and walked around the weirder parts of Buckfastleigh before climbing the 200 odd steps to the churchyard of Buckfastleigh Old Church. The church had been gutted by an arsonist in 1992.

Bob Mann introduced the event with a lecture explaining the truth behind the legends surrounding

Richard Cabell and the Devil's Hunting Pack. This was followed by Gail-Nina Anderson who talked about the iconic significance of the black dog in society and Mark North who talked about Black Dogs in Dorset. Nigel Wright discussed his theories about the links between big cat sightings and the ancient Black Dog legends. Finally Richard Freeman rounded the afternoon off with a talk about mystery dogs of the world. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for coming. Each year we get a few more, and whilst I am very disappointed that more people, especially those from Devon itself didn't attend despite massive amounts of advertising, the feedback I have received suggests that those who did attend had a good time.

We raised enough money (just) to buy the CFZ a second-hand elderly laptop computer to assist us in our research, which is what we had hoped to achieve.

I ain't gonna make a fuss about the number of people that came, but I do think that it is a pity that the only non-corporate convention of this size in the UK is so poorly attended. We will continue to do what we do because we believe in it not because we are in it for the money – we ain't – but because we believe what we do to be valid. It is sad however that over sixty people telephoned me over the previous ten days and promised to come. NONE of them did.

Let's hope that WYRD WEEKEND 4 in October 2003 will attract more people, because although it is great fun it is an enormous amount of work and at times I feel that we are banging our heads against the proverbial wall. However, as forteans I guess we should be used to that.....

I would like to thank the organising committee: Graham Inglis, Jo from the University Sci Fi club, JohnJohn Allegri, Nichola Sullings who has been an absolute angel, George Bishop and Richard Freeman for their enormous amounts of work over the last four months. I would also like to thank my team of helpers – John "Black John" Fuller, Nigel Wright and my daughter Lisa. If there were such a thing as a forteen medal for services above and beyond the call of duty they would have been awarded it.

Finally, I would like to thank Joe McGonagle (who was after all a paying customer) for ferrying around some of the more infirm members of the party and staying sober in order to do so. Until next year....

JON DOWNES

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Hope is alive for the ivorybilled woodpecker

By Chester Moore, Jr.

Carl Zeiss Optics sponsored a massive search for the ivorybilled woodpecker at the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Southwestern Louisiana from Jan. 17-Feb. 15, 2002.

The search ended without the six member team getting a glimpse of the majestic bird which most scientists believe went extinct more than 30 years ago. But there is hope the species is still alive.

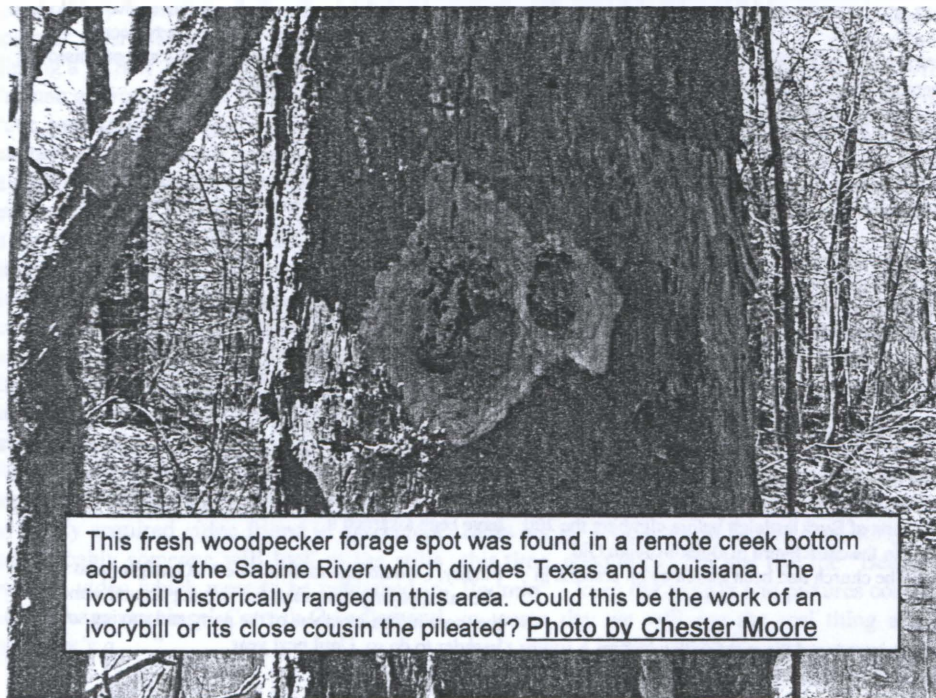
In fact there's great hope.

They heard four double raps, separated by 20-30 seconds, followed by a single rap, which was followed by four consecutive raps. The fourth double rap and the subsequent raps were recorded onto digital audio tape using a parabolic microphone by researcher Martjan Lammertink.

Four of the team members heard a series of loud signal taps at 3:30 p.m. on January 27, the eleventh day of the search.

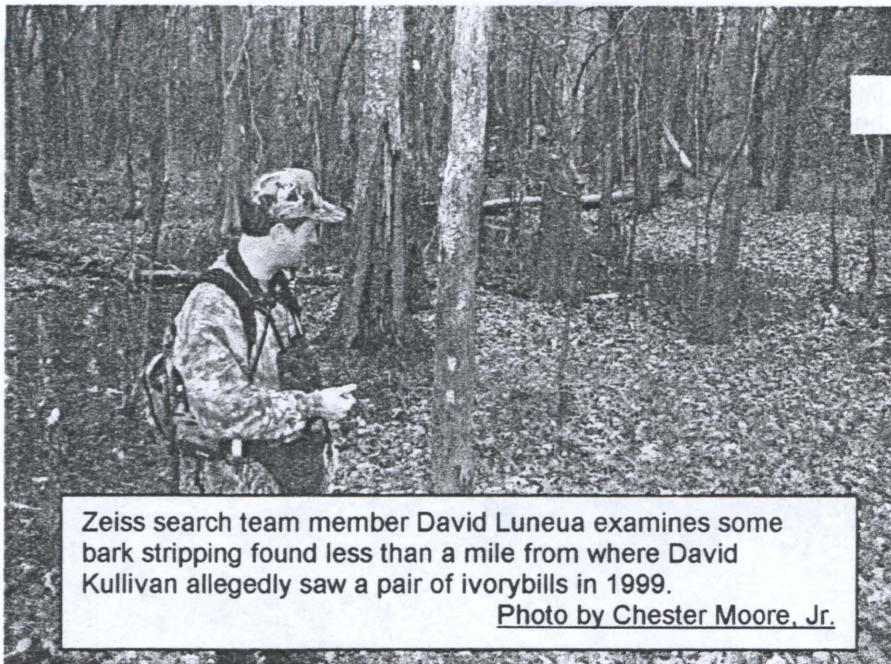
The searchers marked their location with global positioning system units (GPS units) when they heard the sound but were unable to move closer because of high water in the area.

"The goal of this search was to find the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and photograph it. We did not see an Ivory-billed Woodpecker, but we found potential evidence of its presence in the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Pearl River Wildlife Management Area," said the Zeiss Search Team in a joint statement.



This fresh woodpecker forage spot was found in a remote creek bottom adjoining the Sabine River which divides Texas and Louisiana. The ivorybill historically ranged in this area. Could this be the work of an ivorybill or its close cousin the pileated? Photo by Chester Moore

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Zeiss search team member David Luneua examines some bark stripping found less than a mile from where David Kullivan allegedly saw a pair of ivorybills in 1999.

Photo by Chester Moore, Jr.

Remarkably, the search team later learned that at 10:30 on the same morning they obtained their recording, a team from Cornell University also heard one double rap 1.3 kilometers from the recording site.

While searching for the source of the sound, the Cornell team saw one pileated woodpecker (which resembles the ivorybill) and one unidentified large woodpecker involved in a chase high in the trees, then flying off.

"Having heard one clear example of this unusual double-rap ourselves, earlier that same day and in an area not too distant from where the Zeiss team was searching, we remain quite intrigued to discover its source," said Dr. John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

"Neither we nor the Zeiss team ever heard pileated woodpeckers giving this display during many days in the field, yet pileateds were the only large

woodpeckers we could locate near where we'd heard these double-raps."

"We cannot rule out that these could have been displays by pileateds, but if they were, it would be strange that we heard the sounds only on that particular day, in that particular place."

After hearing the search team's recording, Dr. Van Remsen, an ornithologist at Louisiana State University and curator of ornithology at its Museum of Natural Science became very excited.

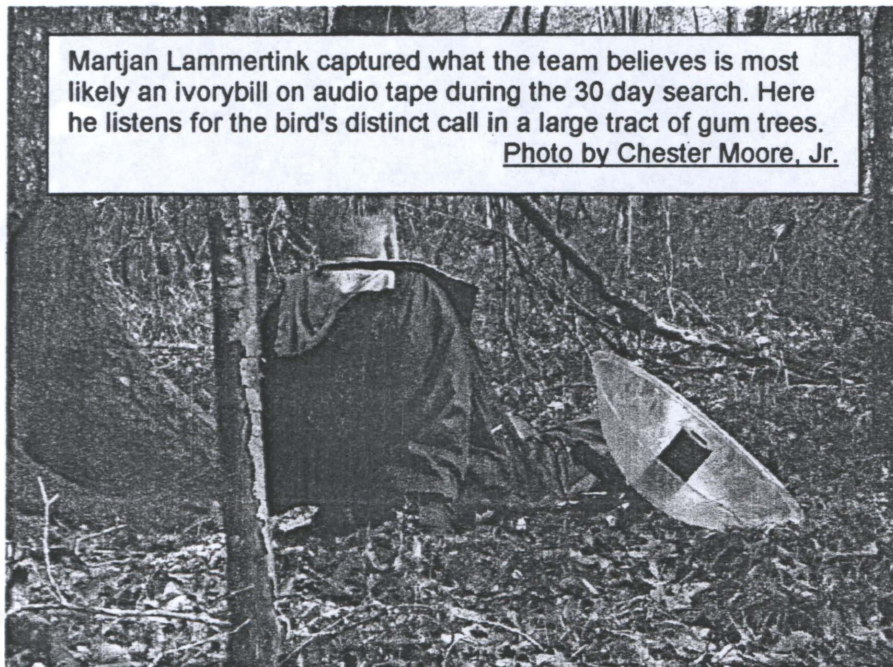
"Having listened to pileated drumming many times, Lammertink's recording sent a chill down my spine, literally," he said.

"For the last 12 years, I have been around pileated woodpeckers nearly daily where I live, but I have never heard them make a sound that came close to this in terms of both power and rhythm."

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Martjan Lammertink captured what the team believes is most likely an ivorybill on audio tape during the 30 day search. Here he listens for the bird's distinct call in a large tract of gum trees.

Photo by Chester Moore, Jr.



Throughout the search, the Zeiss team discovered concentrations of tree bark scaling, the primary method used by Ivory-billed Woodpeckers in foraging for food but also used to a lesser extent by pileateds.

On January 29, two days after the team made the recording, one team member heard a double rap, and then two team members heard several loud raps, similar to the sounds previously recorded.

Team members found concentrations of extensive bark scaling, plus several large, fresh cavity starts and large, older cavities in the area where the sounds were recorded. I got to hit the field with the team Jan. 21 and spent the day with Lammertink (the guy who got the recording) and David Luneau of the University of Arkansas.

Some of the promising sign they speak of are areas we found that day in the woods. Luneau is now convinced ivorybilled woodpeckers are still alive in that area.

"I'm convinced the species is still alive and hope they can be discovered before it's too late," Luneau said.

If ivorybills still exist I wonder how many field biologists, birders and hunters have passed off as pileated?

After all, running into an ivorybill isn't the driving force behind most people entering the woods. It's hard to find something if you're not looking for it or at least mindful of its existence.

Birder Chris Geraghty has made similar conclusions after excursions into the field.

"In our team's experience, we could not get within 200 yards of any pileated woodpecker. We could hear plenty of them, but seeing them was difficult. One of the reasons for not seeing them is due to the amount of noise created when walking in that habitat."

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"Most of the time there are leaves rustling and twigs snapping. To actually find an ivorybill by simply walking through this area would be difficult. I stress this area because it is a hunter's ground and birds are not behaving in their normal way. They are extra wary," Geraghty wrote on a Web site dedicated to the pursuit of ivorybills.

Instead of concentrating on one area it might be more productive to look at other areas in the South with suitable habitat. Ivorybills require virgin or at least mature stands of timber where certain species of grubs and other insects are present.

I'm in the process of contacting forestry bureaus, biologists, hunting clubs and landowners to try and create a database of habitat that could potentially house ivorybills. This could be useful to birders trying to capture a photo or make a recording of any ivorybills that might be left in the South.

I live a few miles from one such area in East Texas.

It's a remote hardwood bottomland that was last logged in the early 1900s and is rarely explored except by a few duck hunters. It contains thousands of acres of mature bottomland and is within easy flying distance of a couple of other smaller stands of mature bottomland timber.

I'm not saying there are any ivorybills in there. In fact, as far as I know no one has ever reported them being there, but you can bet I will go take a look and listen. More importantly though when considering this area as potential habitat it opens the door to numerous other areas in the South possibly serving as refuge to ivorybills.

Remember science knows very little about the species so limiting their possible range to the Pearl River WMA is counterproductive to the true pursuit of the species.

If these birds are still around there's a good chance someone is going to capture one of film.

And if they do it will be the birding discovery of the millennium.

Some skeptics say it's already too late for that but we should remember ivorybills have proven science wrong once before. In the 1980s researchers

discovered a few of the Cuban subspecies where they were supposed to have disappeared a decade before.

When looking at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service database of endangered species it looks as if they still believe the species is around. They're listed as "endangered", not extinct. Texas, Louisiana, Florida and several other states also list the ivorybill as "endangered" under state law.

The dodo bird isn't listed as endangered. Neither is the passenger pigeon if you catch my drift.

Hope is still alive at the highest levels.

(Chester Moore is an award-winning outdoor writer from Texas. He is author of *The Ivorybilled Woodpecker: Alive in the Southern Swamplands?* And his host of www.cryptokeeper.com and www.ivorybilledwoodpecker.com.)

Jun 9, 2002: Study: Sound Was Not Rare Woodpecker, but Distant Gunfire

NEW ORLEANS (AP) - Listening devices placed in Louisiana swamps in hopes of recording the sound of the ivory-billed woodpecker picked up sharp raps that turned out to be gunfire, not sounds of the rare bird, researchers said Sunday. The ivory-billed woodpecker is widely believed to be extinct, but a Louisiana State University student's detailed account of a possible sighting in 1999 raised hopes that there are still some around in south Louisiana's Pearl River Wildlife Management Area. In a search last winter by Cornell University and Zeiss Sports Optics of Chester, Va., a dozen acoustic recording units, or ARUs, were set out to record two to three months' worth of swamp sounds.

Captured on tape were a series of distinctive double-raps, reminiscent of the ivory-billed's distinctive rapping on dead wood. "Sadly, analysis of the ARU data proved that the sounds were distant gun shots, with reverberations that sounded to human ears like drumming on a hollow snag," Zeiss Sports Optics said in a Sunday news release. "If there is good news here, it is in knowing that the ARU technology could provide independent and conclusive evidence as to the nature of these sounds," said John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and a leader of the February expedition. Fitzpatrick said he still thinks it's possible that the ivory-billed woodpecker is living in parts of the Pearl River forest outside of the area covered by the machines.

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The British Lynx

by Chris Moiser

(Zoologist, lecturer and writer)

For watchers of alien big cat reports the last year has not possibly been the best, because, yet again there have been no conclusive pictures or the capture of a "British" puma or leopard. There has however been a more subtle happening, or at least a series of happenings, which point to a new feline addition to our British fauna, or perhaps I should say a replacement of an extinct member of our British fauna. I am, of course, talking about the Eurasian Lynx.

The Eurasian Lynx (*Lynx lynx*) is officially supposed to have died out in Britain sometime about the end of the Neolithic period (about 2,500 BC), although even that is uncertain as there are mentions of, what may be, lynx in historical times. Raphael Holinshead, a 16th century English chronicler, said:

"Lions we have had very many in the North parts of Scotland and those with manes of no less force than those of Mauretania; but how and when they were destroyed I do not yet read".

The venerable Bede, Anglo Saxon scholar, theologian and historian, in one of his writings describes Northumbrian shepherds as guarding their flocks from "lions". In both cases the lions are very unlikely to be lions, which did exist in Britain but almost certainly went extinct twelve thousand years or more before present.

The mistake in calling lynx "lions" is quite easy to make when you consider that at the respective times very few people in Britain would have seen a lion. Lynx are large stocky cats, and both sexes do seem to have large side whiskers which are almost mane-like. They are also very capable hunters which in parts of their range kill prey many times bigger than themselves. Although there have been suggestions that lynx may have survived until even more recent times most biologists would reject this.

A number of happenings in the last year though have suggested that there may be a number of things happening with lynx within Great Britain that could lead to them becoming re-established here. As ever

with these things it began quietly. A report was picked up by some of the national newspapers in early May (2001) that a young adult lynx had been captured, without a great amount of fuss, in Cricklewood, North London. The animal was taken to London zoo where it was examined and found to be in good condition except for a leg injury. In fairness the animal wasn't too bothered about being seen by people, and was almost certainly an animal which had been in captivity until possibly a few days before it was captured.

The problem was that all cats except the domestic cat may only be kept under licence, usually either a Dangerous Wild Animal Act licence or a zoo licence, and no licensed animals were missing. In fact in the year since "Lara", as she became known, was captured the former owners have still not been identified.

Evidence then started to appear quite rapidly that possibly lynx were here already, had been for some time, and that there were a number of unlicensed animals secretly in captivity. The first piece of evidence was sent into one of the "British Big Cat Society" web site and involved an allegation that a lynx was killed in the Norfolk-Suffolk border in 1991. The report was rapidly followed by a photograph of the body of the lynx, together with details of the incident. It was rapidly clear that this was a serious report, the game keeper was named, photographs were produced and details were given of a local "big game hunter" who had purchased the stuffed remains.

Shortly after this reports appeared of two lynx being seized by the authorities in Yorkshire. These animals were unlicensed and were apparently going to be released to be hunted! Whilst the RSPCA mentioned them in a press release that was aimed at influencing the government's review of the Dangerous Wild Animal Act, they seemed reluctant to discuss the issue. Even questions such as "Is anyone being prosecuted?" were not answered.

When attending the West Country Game Fair on the British Big Cat Society stand a number of the west country hunting fraternity volunteered that they were aware that one or two less savoury members of the hunting community might be having lynx released, to hunt them, in the South West.

This information was not sought, but came out in conversation quite casually. Other hunters claimed to have seen big cats at various times whilst out hunting.

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None had shot at the cats they saw. The explanation for this being either they couldn't decide whether to shoot the animal the animal the time they had, they were worried about losing their firearms licence because the species they were looking at was not one listed on their licence, or they were just so amazed to see the animal that they did not wish to shoot it.

Just after the show another person, a professional man, who worked in one of the health care professions contacted the British Big Cat Society with details of his recent disagreement with a lynx.

The story was fairly straight forward, he was in the garden when he saw a "fox" carrying off a rabbit that was still alive. He was aware that his neighbour kept rabbits and moved in, intending to rescue the rabbit. When he was fairly close the "fox" turned and "slashed" him once, across the hand. He was at this stage more than aware that this animal was not a fox, and subsequently attended his local casualty department for multiple lacerations to the hand.

The photograph that he later provided showed injuries that were highly consistent with the explanation. The casualty department staff apparently found his explanation quite believable when they saw the wounds.

Possibly the most interesting report then came half way through February this year when the Observer carried a news report that the "Rural Guerrillas" a Scots underground group stated that if the Scottish Parliament banned fox hunting they would release twelve lynx in four different locations in Scotland.

Subsequent investigation found that the group was actually associated with the Wild Beasts Trust. This latter group have been in existence for some time and were first considering the release of lynx as early as 1996.

The Scottish Parliament went ahead with the fox hunting ban and it was subsequently claimed that the release of the lynx had gone ahead. The alleged sites of the releases were in the Borders, Galloway and near the 30,000 acre Balnagowan Castle estate belonging to Mohammed al-Fayed.

To further attract publicity it appears that two of the cats released on the latter site were called "Neil and Christine".

Some of the lynx had allegedly been bought in France, but at least six of them had been kept in a property on the Borders since Christmas 2001.

Lothian and Borders police claimed that they had no evidence of the release, but admitted that such behaviour would amount to a criminal offence. If lynx were to become established in Britain again they would have an effect on the deer, fox, rabbit and hare population. In addition they would also take game birds, and probably some domestic livestock. Some figures published a few years ago from Croatia do at least infer that the risk to domestic livestock may be relatively small when the lynx have adequate supplies of wild food.

Whilst re-introducing them might have been a criminal offence it is not necessarily an ecologically bad idea. A number of academic biologists, including at least one professor, believe that our grazing wildlife (the deer and rabbits) are inadequately controlled having no natural predators to prey on them.

The re-introduction of the lynx may, if handled correctly, help to restore a balance to this situation. With increased controls on the use of firearms and hunting with dogs why not insert a biological control by the re-introduction of one of Britain's natural predators, albeit an illegal reintroduction?

A further point of interest is that Peter Clarke, a member of the Wild Beasts Trust, states that if the lynx prosper other species could be re-introduced. His list of possible introductions includes Wairus, Brown Bear, lemming, Elk, Boar, Wolverine and Bison. The idea being eventually to reconstitute the landscape that predates farming.

Perhaps a more pertinent concern is if a rural pressure group are able to release twelve lynx where were they able to get them from?

Did they really import some or all of them from France or do we really have that many "unlicensed" animals being kept and bred in captivity, and if so what else is being kept secretly in the U.K?

If you can answer either of these questions contact THE AUTHOR. c/o *Animals & Men*

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Encounter with a Pooka?

By Louise Donnan

One clear summer evening in 1997, myself and my niece Claire (aged 17) went for a run in the car as Claire had just passed her driving test. We went out to the Grayfield-Greencastle district, four miles outside of the town of Kilkeel, Co. Down. We were travelling along a long, straight, stretch of country road when we both spotted, in the distance ahead of us an animal on the grass verge besides the road. From this distance it looked like a sheep, but we both agreed that it seemed like a very large "sheep" indeed with a coat made up of what looked like bits of torn rags as opposed to wool.

As we approached the animal we slowed down to get a look at it, as we were both bewildered to what type of animal it was. Just as we were adjacent to it, it turned its head and looked directly at us. We both gasped in disbelief and revulsion. I no sooner had the words "What the Hell is THAT?" out when it charged straight at the car which at this stage was almost at a stop. Its face was right up to Claire's window and both of us – just for a second or so – looked right into its eye. I say 'eye' as the other eye was covered by its tatty coat.

We were both almost frozen in fear as the eye looking straight at us was reddish in colour, and gave a terrible wild penetrating stare. When I looked in its eye, I could almost see its mind working powerfully behind it, a mind not of an ordinary animal but one with another sense and evil which I had never encountered before (or since). I felt sick with fear, but thankfully Claire was able to compose herself enough to accelerate the car and we took off at an impressive speed. Our relief was very short lived as we suddenly felt a 'thud' at the side of the car. To our horror this mad "animal", we thought we had gotten away from, was running alongside us and deliberately banging into the car.

I screamed at Claire to go faster which she did, and we both felt terror and disbelief that this 'thing' was able to keep up with us. Just as I felt that we weren't going to get away, the "animal", suddenly stooped the

chase and just stood in the middle of the road watching as we escaped at great speed. As I looked behind me out of the rear window of the car I got the impression that the "animal" hadn't even tired, but had, for some reason, reached the decision to go no further as it had reached the edge of its territory. It was some time and distance later before both Claire and I felt safe from it and we were both still saying things like "What was that?" and "How could that thing travel at that speed?"

When we returned home, we were both very shaken by the experience and told family members what had happened. Naturally we were told that we had over-active imaginations and that it must have been just a large dog. We both knew that what we had seen was no dog but abandoned the subject as we knew we weren't going to be believed and perhaps a bit of fun-making may have started and neither of us were in the mood for this.

Since then I have avoided this area as my blood still runs cold each time I think of that day. About a year after this happened I was in a boyfriend's car one night when he suggested that we take a run out in that direction. I said "No Way" and insisted that we didn't go anywhere near there. He was puzzled by my almost hysterical reaction and poked me for my reason. I told him my story expecting him to laugh, but surprisingly he didn't and he told me that he had heard a few others tell a similar story. I often think back and wonder what if the car windows had been down? Or what if Claire hadn't have reacted as quickly and skilfully as she did? (Excellent in the circumstances, and given the fact that she had only just passed her driving test).

The last time I spoke to Claire about it we both sat shaking our heads and the conversation ended...

Claire: That was no dog

Louise: That was no sheep

Claire: That was evil



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INTERVIEW:

Col. John
Blashford Snell
(part Two)



After the death of *'The Father of Cryptozoology'* last year we decided that no-one could replace Professor Bernard Heuvelmans as our Honorary Consulting Editor. We decided instead to create a new position; Honorary Life

President of the Centre for Fortean Zoology. The successful candidate was selected unanimously from a shortlist of one!

Colonel John Blashford-Snell is the living epitome of the English Gentleman explorer – somewhere between Biggles and Indiana Jones and he is what everyone else in the CFZ Faculty aspires to be. We are very honoured that he agreed to become our Life President. A few weeks later he gave an extensive interview to **RICHARD FREEMAN...**

FREEMAN: A little closer to home, can you tell us a little about the time you went in search of the giant duck-eating perch?

BLASHFORD-SNELL: We didn't know it was a perch at first you see (*laughs*). It was in a pond in a little place called Ickham in Kent.. I was with the Junior Leaders Regiment in Dover. We were always looking for something interesting for them to do during training. These were young men between the ages of 16 and 18 – young adventurous boys. My Regimental Sergeant Major, lived in Ickham. He rang up one day and said that he wondered if we could help him. Apparently there was some kind of monster in a pond in the village which had been eating all the goldfish! They had tried all the fishery board and so on but they couldn't do anything about it, and so he asked whether we could get rid of it.

We had a big exercise on at the time, and my Sergeant Major asked whether he could divert a company and go and look for the creature.

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He came back a couple of days later and said. *"Well, I've been down to Ickham and it DOES look as if there is something in there"*. By this time it was starting to make the newspapers and they were saying that it was either some strange eel, or it was a tropical fish that had escaped from someone's goldfish bowl and had grown and grown and grown and was now gobbling up all the goldfish in Ickham.

By this time the Rivers Board had got worried that whatever it was would get into the river system and kill off all the fish, and then into the sea and that would be the end of the white fish trade. (laughs) It was a real silly season story!

The Sergeant Major came back to me and said that there were now no goldfish left in the pond. I asked how many there had been and he said: *"Three thousand"*. He said that the owner was quite happy for us to let an explosive charge off in the pond which would kill whatever there was in there so he could put all the goldfish back. I said that that sounds alright, and that we should have to tell the local police what we were doing.

On the day in question we went down to the pond. The RSM went down with one of our frogmen and a bit of explosive, and you had to be very careful about letting this stuff off, because you had to see where the explosion was going to take place when you pressed the button. There was nowhere really here to take cover close enough to the pond.

So we brought one of armoured cars in and motored it up to the fence. We put one of our soldiers in the turret, and he pressed the button setting off the explosion. Of course he was quite safe inside the armoured car. But, by this point the local Army Public Relations Officer had decided that this was a wonderful story about young soldiers helping the community and so he warned the press. It was the day that President Carter was coming to England on a state visit, and there were more press gathered round this bloody fishpond than there were at Heathrow.

The explosion went off and everything flew up in the air. There was nothing to see, of course, because there was just mud there. The press

went off, and I said *"if you come back in a couple of days when we've sifted through all the mud, we can see what there was down there"*.

A couple of days later we got the Rivers Board in with their tackle. They were sifting through the mud when they found this enormous perch – about fifteen pounds or so. It was in a hole in the bank. It wasn't dead – just stunned – and the Fisheries Board got it out, carted it off in a tank and put it into a reservoir near Canterbury.

I don't know how this thing had got into the pond – even though it was quite a big one – but gradually it had eaten the entire population of Goldfish. (laughs)

FREEMAN: Would you like to tell us a little bit about the humped elephants of Nepal?

BLASHFORD-SNELL: It was when I was travelling up to Tibet. We were asked by a person from the Wildlife Department in Katmandu to look into a local legend which, again, was worrying the local Government. It was a story that there was a mammoth in western Nepal. I said that this was rubbish, but that I was prepared to do an expedition if someone could get a photograph of this thing to prove that I wasn't wasting my time.

Well, two years later, a young lady turned up to see me in London with a photograph that she had taken from a canoe going down the Kamali river. It showed an extraordinary elephant like creature. It had a strange, domed head, and a very thick body – much thicker than that of an ordinary elephant. It looked like it had an enlarged genital area and an almost ribbed tail. It was a type of elephant, but a very weird one.

She said *"This is the monster – this is what the people say is the mammoth"*. Well it did look a little bit mammoth-like but it wasn't hairy, but we agreed to form an expedition. We took executives this time – the wrinklies; the over twenty-fives, and we started to comb the valleys that led down into this National Park where the thing was living. The Government said that there were no elephants there – only tigers and things – but I said that they were quite wrong. After all, this girl had seen it and I had a photograph to prove it.

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Anyway, the first year that we went there, all we found were the footprints, but the footprints were 22.5 inches across.

There is a well established formula for gauging the height of an elephant. If you measure the fore footprint and then multiply it by six you get the height at the shoulder. We then worked out that this creature was eleven foot three at the shoulder, which is larger than any elephant that had ever been seen in Asia. The closest to it was a giant one in Ceylon which was eleven foot one. So, whatever it was, was a pretty big animal.

The second year, we went back, still without having seen the creature, but this time I took the precaution of offering quite a reasonable sum of money to people who wanted to augment their living as farmers or whatever. Within a week of our arrival, the head-man came in and said *"I can take you and show you where the monster is"*.

We sent a chap out. He was one of our members who was actually the Manager of Marks & Spencer so he knew a fair amount about measuring. He said that he could tell the size of a woman's knickers just by looking at her once (laughs).

He went out with one of these hunters, and they found the footprints and measured them. Sure enough they were twenty two and a half inches in diameter, so they came running back to camp. The next morning we took the domestic elephants that we used and rode out. We got to the edge of some trees about five miles from our camp. All the elephants stopped, and put their ears out rather like parabolic reflectors, and started to make purring sounds.

It was ULF but always sounded a bit like indigestion, although it was their form of communication. Obviously they could see something in the trees that we couldn't. We yelled a few sort of mating calls and so on, and after a bit of toing-and-froing, suddenly we could see this enormous head emerging from out of the trees.

We gave a gasp, and into view came not one but two huge bull elephants, with great curved tusks, huge domed foreheads and, sloping backs. They

really did look very much like mammoths. Over a period of two weeks we spent a lot of time getting close to them. They were fairly docile, although one was a bit stropky, and we thought *"well these are certainly elephants"*. They would come after our female elephants which suggested that they were probably Asian elephants. But no-one had seen anything like it.

We got film. CNN used it on their world programme, and then people started writing to us and taking a lot of interest. Then we said to the Nepalese: *"You must protect these creatures because they are unique – they are the only two in the whole area."* So the Nepalese sent in soldiers and they have guarded the area ever since, which led to a rapid increase in the tiger population.

But the mystery remained as to what they were. So we then got involved with several biologists, and eventually Dr Adrian Lister, who was the foremost expert on mammoths. He came with us and saw them at close proximity and said *"Well, they are certainly not mammoths – I don't THINK – but we've got to get us some DNA"*. This created the next problem, because no-one wanted to go up and pluck a hair from one of these creatures, and no-one could find anything except dung.

Adrian had the idea of trying to get DNA from dung. If you think about it, the elephant's food passes through the digestive tract pretty rapidly, and small portions of skin could be broken off and turn up in the dung. So we took samples of dung, took them back to Cambridge, and lo and behold we got DNA. They were able to compare this with the DNA of long dead mammoths which had been frozen in the tundra of Siberia, and with the DNA of circus elephants and all sorts of elephants, and they found that although there was a relationship with the mammoths, they weren't mammoths, they were Asian elephants. The difference was the height. The measurement between the top of the domed head and the eye was twenty percent bigger on all these creatures so they gave you the impression of this enormous domed head.

We didn't know why they were there, because there didn't seem to be any cow elephants, but shortly afterwards we discovered these in the forests. There were not only one or two but a whole *herd* of

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cows with cows and so on. So there was a herd of about fifteen combined bulls and cows living in this area of about a thousand square km. It had obviously become a sort of private refuge for them, with the Himalayas behind, and the plain of India to the south, and rivers on either side. They had been multiplying ever since. Why they should have grown into this extraordinary size and shape and look so much different from ordinary Asian elephants, I'm not sure. Age may be a factor as may isolation.

So, there you are. We've been doing studies on them ever since. On the last visit we were able to find two skeletons, both virtually complete, so we were able to do many more measurements, and take proper DNA samples and so on. But the most important thing is that because the Nepalese suddenly realised that they had a unique item here, they protected them which led to the much wider protection of the one horned rhino, and the tiger which would probably all have been slaughtered by now.

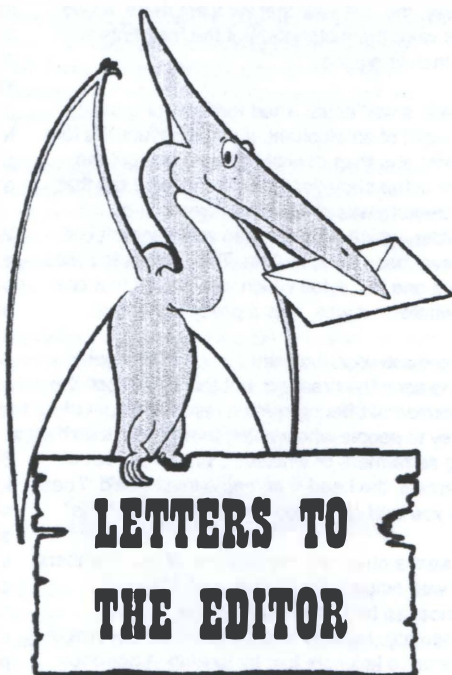
FREEMAN: One last question. How do you find the funding for these expeditions?

BLASHFORD-SNELL: Well, it's sort of like a mini golf club. Everyone pays. We work out the cost of the expedition and everyone chips in. And we're a charity, you know. And there's the books we sell. We have fund raising drives.

We also have a lot of sponsors especially with some of the more newsworthy expeditions people are keen to have their names associated with it.

On the big reed boat expedition, the British Tug company A.P.Knight. BP came in on the last voyage and provided petrol. Sometimes it's vehicles. We have a good selection of supporters, many of whom come with us or send members of their company with us.

FREEMAN: Thank you very much.



The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

Hi Jon,

My Dad has a habit of springing things on me - he was a Royal Engineer and travelled the world and, incidentally, has just completed his autobiography - an extract :

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"Sherpa Tensing was our guest on two occasions at Phusre. I understood that his Nepalese home was two weeks' march from us and he stayed with us when he was en route from Darjeeling where he established a mountaineering school. He gave me a signed portrait of himself which is in the album of my military career.

In 1958 mountaineer Norman Dyhrenfurth stayed a couple of nights with us at Phusre. He came after a climb in Eastern Nepal and claimed he had seen footprints of the Yeti or abominable snowman. He took me to one side and showed me in great confidence, as he had not yet disclosed it to the press, a bag containing what he believed were bones of a Yeti. I never heard the outcome of their scientific examination but I didn't find them very convincing.

During one of my visits to Kathmandu in 1956 the Ambassador gave a dinner party at which I sat next to Han Suyin the authoress. She had been invited to the coronation of the King and was staying on to get material for her book "The Mountain is Young" which was published in 1958. I was taken by her vivid personality and was fascinated by her book. Most of the characters in it I recognised as real people. The Redworths were Boyd Tollinton, the Ambassador, and his wife Judith. They were a delightful and hospitable couple and a gin was hardly ever out of reach. Vassili was Boris Lissanevich and Hilda was Inger his Danish wife. Colonel Jaganathan was Col Vincent Raknaswami who was the Indian Army Engineer Officer in charge of building the road from India into the Kathmandu Valley. Han Suyin is said to have had an affair with him. I felt myself fortunate to have met such colourful people."

He'd never even mentioned a Yeti before! Luckily (assuming the fates are with him) he's extra keen on coming to the next unconviction - particularly after the lure of the Ark, Lionel's Mazes and Buried Alive! We Shall See.

.Unfortunately kids are sufficiently restless, and I'm still writing at 1:30, that I am seldom in a deep enough sleep to get the dreams these days - just now and then. Have fun.

Dave

Surrey via e.mail

ONE MAN'S MEAT

Hi.

Sorry to bother you, but a friend and I were talking recently (we're both animal science students in Devon) and I happened to mention that I had buried one of my cats up in the pet cemetery next to the Haldon Belvedere. She showed me the book that you'd published, 'Weird Devon'. I was stunned to read about the possibility of there being a puma on Haldon.... especially since, just two weeks after burying my cat, I'd gone up there with a friend to visit the grave only to discover that my cat had been dug up. The blanket she had been wrapped in at the time had been torn open and left beside the grave. The headstone and flowers from my previous visit were still there and intact.

We talked about it for a while longer. At the time I'd assumed it was vandals (although I did think it was rather strange that they'd taken the body and left everything else) or possibly a dog or a fox. But my friend and I happen to be relatively clued up on canid predation and behaviour and soon decided that was highly unlikely. We also thought it was perhaps quite significant that the grave was right on the outskirts of the cemetery and was also quite shallow, covered over mostly with leaf litter and wood.

Again, sorry to bother you, but as soon as I read the chapter on the possibility of there being a puma (or perhaps even two or more) on Haldon it all seemed to make sense.

If there is any research myself or my friend can help you out with then please do get back to me. Many thanks and best of luck!

Emma Lawrence
Exeter via email

KING OF THE FLIES

Dear Editor,

I recently read your website's article on mystery insects and was intrigued by the mention of the "blood sucker".

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The description sounds somewhat like a creature that I witnessed when I was just 13.

I was on vacation and had just laid down on a makeshift bed on my grandmothers floor. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a brownish thing scurrying across the carpet. I was startled (I'm a big arachniphobe) so I leapt up immediately. The bug looked insect-like but its legs were very long, like a spider's. It was about the size of half-dollar. It had a large ball on one end which (for lack of a better description) looked much like a skull. I assume this was the head since the bug moved in the direction of the "skull". I would have killed it but it ran under a sofa before I could get to it.

I don't know what exactly it was but I do know that I'd never heard of or seen anything like it. Keep in mind that I am not from Hong Kong but West Virginia. I don't know if my information will be of any use to you but I just thought that the similarities between my encounter and your description was interesting.

Craig Spears,
West Virginia via email

COLLAPSING NEW PEOPLE

Dear Sirs:

I wanted to relate to you a sighting I made of unusual animals. I live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I am an optician, commute to West Palm Beach, 50 miles to the North, on which occasions I take a commuter train. I was on the train yesterday, sitting by the window and looking down at the parallel tracks about 6:15 PM. Suddenly about three feet from the tracks, I saw what looked like two small earless greyhounds facing each other.

I saw them for maybe 2 seconds, and to be truthful I am not sure what it is that I saw, except they had the basic shape of a dog (greyhound like) were very spindly and looked like they had no ears. They seemed to have dog like legs so I am thinking it rules out an otter. I saw the animals in the vicinity of Delray beach Florida, on the West side of the tracks, near a small wooded area. I only caught a glimpse but I wish to stress that they were extremely unusual looking. I

have lived in Florida for 28 years, and have considerable experience with the wildlife here, but this was very unusual.

Please believe I am not a nutcase, I just wanted to relate this sighting in case anyone else sees them.

They appeared to be about one foot in height at the shoulder, and about 16-24 inches in length, small for a dog. The sighting was very spooky so I wanted to relate it to someone who deals in these things.

Sincerely
Carl in Fort Lauderdale via e-mail

RICHARD FREEMAN REPLIES: Florida has a big problem with exotic wildlife encroaching on it. Mostly abandoned pets which are now living and breeding in the semi-tropical state. These creatures may have been genets or linsangs. It is hard to make any firmer identification without more details, especially of the colour of the creatures.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

Dear Sir,

I contacted someone in Western Massachusetts concerning the description below, among other phenomena occurring within our house. She suggested I contact you with this description and see if it falls into any Fortean categories. Please advise if this makes any sense to you:

The best I can describe this is as a misty, ghostly stingray, about 18 inches wide and 24 inches long, red in color with white ruffles towards the front that flew into our open door, over our kitchen table and disappeared. My wife saw this from a standing position as a sideways view while I saw it from underneath as I sat at the table.

It seemed to trail things, like torn or shredded clothes but both my wife and I agreed it mimicked the flowing motions and shape of a swimming stingray.

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I wondered if you could shed light on what this is. Any help or guidance on this is appreciated.

Thanks.
Dave Partridge
via e-mail

RICHARD FREEMAN REPLIES: The description sounds very like that of a vampire; which, by the way, have scant resemblance to the typical westernised image of such things. Chupacabra aside, most vampire reports speak of an amorphous blob often coloured red. One theory is that they are the etheric revenant of the recently dead. Etheric scavengers, they are thought to feed from the living. The ancient Egyptians knew of them and called them the *Khu*. We would refer those in search of more information on such things to *Monsters – An Investigator's Guide to Magical Beings* by John Michael Greer (Llewellyn Books)



SNAKES AND LADDERS

Dear Jonathan,

As always, I enjoyed reading the latest edition of *Animals & Men*. Thank you for your generous remarks about me.

At the end of July I am leading a Scientific Exploration Society expedition in Bolivia. We shall be following up the major archaeological discoveries made on the three *Kota Mama* projects from 1998-2001. As we are operating in some little explored areas where there are plenty of rumours of strange creatures, we have a young biologist with us. Along the Beni River, there are many stories of giant anaconda although I have not seen one longer than fifteen feet. However, I am hoping that we may be able to investigate sightings of much larger ones. It is said by the local people that global warming and recent El Nino weather patterns have caused a temperature change in the waterways inhabited by these reptiles and that they are now being seen more often on land.

When we were in the area in 2000, an Indian boy was reported to have been killed by an anaconda, that when killed measured 28 ft. However, the photo of this incident that appeared on the Internet turned out to be of a reticulated python that had swallowed a man in India around 1977. Nevertheless, I have heard reports from reliable witnesses including a leading agricultural scientist of Bolivian anacondas exceeding fifty feet.

I shall be interested to hear from any of your readers able to give factual information on the subject, or for that matter, any cryptozoological subjects relating to Bolivia.

Best wishes,
John Blashford-Snell,
Dorset.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We are sending Colonel Blashford-Snell the Bolivian material from our archives, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish our Hon. Life President all success and Godspeed in his forthcoming expedition.

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**All reviews are
by the world's only gothic
cryptozoologist unless otherwise
noted**

*Mammoth: The Resurrection of an
Ice Age Giant*

By Richard Stone
(Fourth Estate 2001)
ISBN 1-84115-517-9
£14.99

Anyone who knows me will know that I have
a deep and profound fascination with that

bleak, unforgiving, and deeply mysterious land
known as Siberia. This vast frozen wilderness is
larger than Europe and the US combined and
contains the world's mightiest forest, the
Siberian Tiga.

If one animal could be said to encapsulate this
icy, abandoned quarter it is the woolly
mammoth. As reported in past issues exciting
projects are now underway to clone living
mammoths from DNA taken from specimens
frozen in the slurry of Arctic Siberia.

Richard Stone gives an excellent overview in
this book and a lot more besides. He charts the
first discoveries of the frozen mammoths and the
great ivory rush they caused.

He tells us of the native Dolgan tribes people
and their taboos of disturbing mammoth
remains.

The evolution of these beasts, their colonisation
of the new world, and the theories about their
final disappearance (3,700 years ago on Wrangle
Island) are all eloquently dealt with. Yet it is
the possibility of their return in the near future
that make for the most compelling reading.
Using frozen mammoth sperm and or whole
preserved cells two teams of scientists are
working to make this astounding dream a
reality.

One man, Sergei Zimov has begun to create
what he calls "Pleistocene Park". By
introducing Siberian yakut horses, musk oxen,
and American wood bison to an area of boggy
tundra he has begun to transform the landscape
back into mammoth steppe.

This is a fertile, dry, grassland favoured by
mammoths and recreated when the big grazers
have eaten away the mosses and other water
holding plants.

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Next he will move in wolf packs and Siberian tigers (temporarily standing in for dire wolves and cave lions). Finally, if the cloning is a success herds of mammoth will be released.

If the frozen DNA managerie beneath the permafrost is tapped woolly rhino, cave bear, dire wolves, cave lions, and Pleistocene horses could be joining the mammoths. Zimov is the kind of visionary the world needs more of and I wish him the very best of luck.

But stone is not content just to write about the mammoth.

One of the select few journalists allowed in on the project by the Discovery Channel, Stone travelled to Khatanga in October 1999 to view a mammoth newly recovered from the ice and hopefully the first step towards the species resurrection.

The Pleistocene redemption begins here
EXCELSIOR!

*Odd-Bodies: An investigation into
a selection of monsters triggered
by the cosmic mechanism*
By Neil Arnold 2002

Neil has always been one of *Animals & Men's* most prolific and entertaining writers. Now he has self-published a collection of his best articles and a huge quantity of specially written new material as a substantial book. When reading *Odd-Bodies* you are struck by Neil's enthusiasm and dedication. It's heartening to think that cryptozoology has such folk within it's fold.

Herein Neil gives us a true parade of the damned, a managerie of monsters both well

known and obscure. After a "short" introduction (come on Neil, how can you call it short. It's longer than some of the chapters!) he deals with the goat man, the White River monster, the Fouke monster, dragons in Kent, the Scape-Ore lizard man, the Jersey devil, vampires/bedroom invaders/sucubi & incubi, Spring-Heeled Jack, the mad gasser of Mattoon, Mothman, black dogs, and Thora Hird (ok I lied about the last one). Quite a bag of Lovecraftian nightmares!

Neil's writing style is best described as John Keel on speed and does a good job of showing the macabre absurdity of our haunted planet. Most of his cases are in England or the US, it would be nice if he widened his scope a little more but all in all a hopping, slithering, crawling, flapping, gibbering, drooling, box of fortune delights.

Available at £10.00 from
Neil Arnold, 8 Gorse Avenue, Weedswood
Estate, Chatham, Kent, ME5 0UQ

*The Hidden Powers of
Animals: Uncovering the Secrets of
Nature*

By Dr Karl Shuker 2001
(Marshal)
ISBN 1-84028-526-5
£19.99

The latest in the line of tomes from that quality book factory known as Dr Shuker is a digression from his usual cryptozoological fare. Here Karl focuses on the odd behaviour and uncanny abilities of known species.

These can be remarkably weird indeed.. Take for instance the chiton, a primitive mollusc with a magnetic radula, the rat king, a mass of black rats all connected by entwined tails, or the

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frankly repulsive relationship between the rose snapper fish and the marine isopod *Cymotho aexigua*.

This parasite crawls into the fish's mouth and eats its host's tongue. It then attaches itself to the snapper's lower jaw with hooks and becomes the fish's new tongue (God must have been reading Clark Ashton Smith that night!)

Here you will find spiders on drugs, drunken butterflies, animal funerals, and fainting goats. There are many strange facts with which you can amaze your friends and impress the opposite sex.

For example did you know that the duck billed platypus dreams more than any other animal? You do now.

One cryptid does find its way into the book. The vermilion horror known as the Mongolian death worm rears its head in the chapter on electro-magnetism. An amazing book but then Karl seldom fails to deliver.

PS It is untrue that Karl has brought a nuclear power station and now has an assistant called Smithers.

Savage Girls and Wild Boys – a history of feral children

by Michael Newton
(faber & faber)

ISBN 0-571-20139-3
£12.99

I have been particularly interested in the subject of wild children since I was a child in Hong Kong during the 1960s and my late mother read me *The Jungle Book*.

This early exposure to the glories of Kipling's prose and verse led me to pursue a lifelong fatwa against the execrable Disney version – something which has always annoyed my long suffering daughter.

My interest was rekindled about twenty years ago when I was studying to be a nurse, for what were then referred to as "Mental Subnormals", and we studied the effects of abandonment and a hostile environment on small children.

Despite having a title which makes it sound like it is a *Duran Duran* bootleg c.1983, this useful little book is one of the best books on the subject in recent years.

Whilst not being strictly cryptozoological, the study of wild-children is one that fascinates many cryptozoologists including myself. Although such cultural archetypes as Mowgli and Tarzan are well known within the annals of modern literature, there is a sad paucity of noble savages within this excellently researched catalogue of tales about mentally subnormal children abandoned to their fate, only to be rescued by animals.

The big question remains in many cases: Were the children in question mentally handicapped before they were transferred into a feral existence, or is their condition due to a variety of environmental amentias? This book goes much further than most in trying to answer this question.

Although there are a number of 'one-case' books about, for example, Amala and Kamala the wolf children, or Victor – the wild boy of Aveyron, if there is only room on your bookshelf for one book on the subject of feral children, this really should be the one that you choose. JON DOWNES

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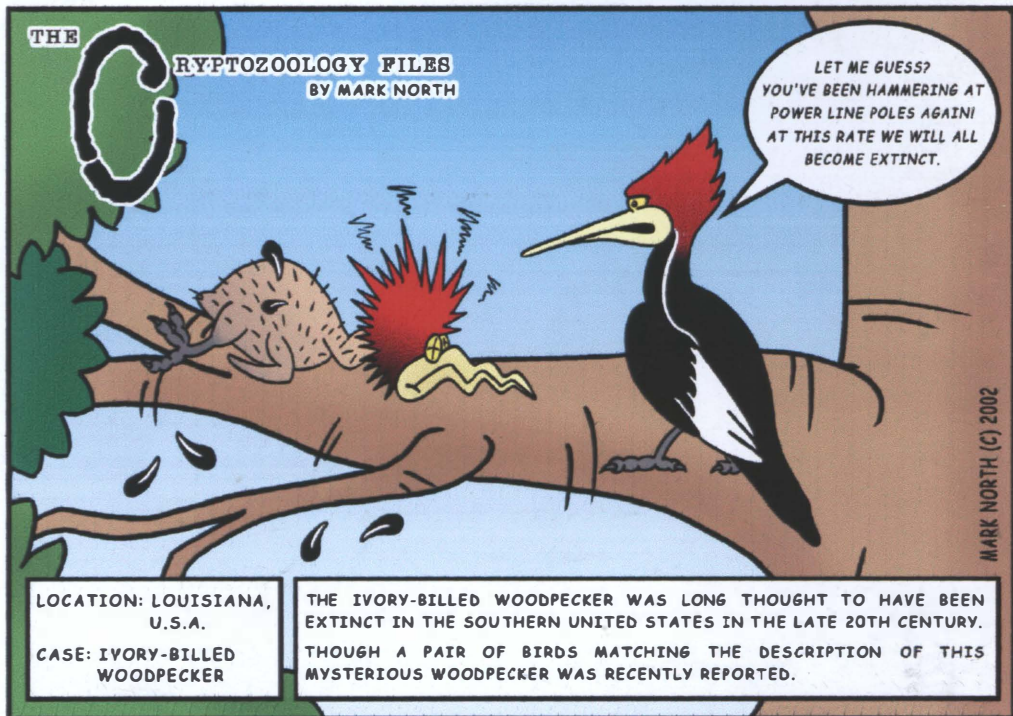
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CRYPTOZOOLOGY FILES

BY MARK NORTH



LOCATION: LOUISIANA,
U.S.A.

CASE: IVORY-BILLED
WOODPECKER

THE IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER WAS LONG THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN EXTINCT IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES IN THE LATE 20TH CENTURY. THOUGH A PAIR OF BIRDS MATCHING THE DESCRIPTION OF THIS MYSTERIOUS WOODPECKER WAS RECENTLY REPORTED.

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Typeset by a fat comic book guy
"worst 'typeset' ever"